



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 165

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2019

No. 76

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MARSHA BLACKBURN, a Senator from the State of Tennessee.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, the giver of every good and perfect gift, make us instruments of Your love. Today, use our lawmakers as ambassadors of reconciliation. Direct them in their work as You surround them with Your gracious favor. Lord, let all their plans and purposes be guided by Your holy will. May their primary aim be to serve You and country with faithfulness as You enlighten them so they will find solutions to the problems that challenge our world. Make us all good stewards, striving to use our influence for Your glory.

We pray in Your gracious Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, May 8, 2019.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable MARSHA BLACKBURN, a Senator from the State of Tennessee, to perform the duties of the Chair.

CHUCK GRASSLEY,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. BLACKBURN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Joseph F. Bianco, of New York, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

STEM SCHOOL HIGHLANDS RANCH SHOOTING

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I am saddened to have to begin my remarks this morning by acknowledging yet another senseless act of school violence in America.

Less than a month after the 20th anniversary of the tragic shooting at Columbine High School, another Colorado community was shattered yesterday afternoon. Just miles away, at the

STEM School Highlands Ranch, one student has been killed, eight others have been wounded, and many more young lives have been changed forever at the hands of two of their fellow students.

I know the entire Senate joins me in holding the victims of yesterday's shooting, their families, and their entire community in our prayers today.

Our gratitude is with the first responders of Douglas County, whose swift action to engage the shooters saved untold lives.

NOMINATIONS

Madam President, on a completely different matter, as I have been discussing, the Senate is continuing to make better progress in its filling of vacancies in the executive branch and the Federal judiciary. After last month's action to restore a more functional, straightforward system for considering lower level nominations, we have begun the process of clearing the executive calendar backlog that has been left by literally years of partisan obstruction.

This morning, we will vote to confirm three qualified individuals the President nominated for the Export-Import Bank: Kimberley Reed, of West Virginia, to serve as President and Spencer Bachus, of Alabama, and Judith Pryor, of Ohio, to serve on the Board of Directors. Combined, they have spent years waiting for confirmation. Now, thanks to last month's action, we will consider them on the floor this week.

We will also vote to confirm Joseph Bianco, of New York, as U.S. circuit judge for the Second Circuit. Mr. Bianco is a graduate of Georgetown University and of Columbia University School of Law. He has contributed years of distinguished service as an assistant U.S. attorney and now as a U.S. district judge for the Southern District of New York. The Senate confirmed him to that last role by a voice vote back in 2005. So I hope we can muster

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S2707

another strong, bipartisan vote of confidence in this exceptionally well-qualified jurist.

Finally, the Senate will consider Janet Dhillon, of Pennsylvania, to serve on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and it will consider Michael Park, of New York, to be a U.S. circuit judge for the Second Circuit. I am proud that even amid partisan distractions, this body will continue fulfilling one of its key constitutional responsibilities.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Madam President, on one final matter, I talked about leaving the “outrage industrial complex” behind and returning focus to the issues that impact the everyday lives of the American people. That is what my Republican colleagues and I have been focused on all along, and we are continuing to see that focus pay off.

For the better part of the last 2 years, the Labor Department’s monthly jobs report has regularly pointed to an economy that has been opening new doors for millions of Americans. It has reinforced what we have known to be the case—that the pro-growth, pro-opportunity agenda enacted by the Republicans has been helping America’s working families, job creators, and entrepreneurs write a remarkable new chapter of prosperity.

Here are just a few of the headlines to emerge following last Friday’s jobs report: “Real gains in the paychecks of average workers”; “Torrent of job offers, bigger salaries offer more proof U.S. labor market is still red-hot”; “U.S. unemployment fell to 3.6 percent, the lowest since December 1969.”

Yet there appears to be plenty of disbelief among Washington Democrats that things like rising wages, consumer confidence, and fierce competition for skilled American workers are causes for celebration. At least, that is what their recent policy proposals have left us to assume.

From a massive Federal experiment in one-size-fits-all health insurance to a Washington-dictated “green” overhaul of American homes, cars, and jobs, the Democrats seem determined to make the current wave of prosperity and economic opportunity short-lived. They are peddling a wholesale shift away from the free enterprise tradition that has unleashed prosperity and opportunity throughout American history, and they are doing so at the very time that daily headlines confirm those principles are still working to literally lift up American families.

In my home State of Kentucky, the unemployment rate has reached its lowest level on record. Communities across the country are tapping into new opportunities for growth, and families and job creators nationwide are benefiting.

So Republicans will continue working hard, laying the groundwork for American free enterprise to seize on this truly extraordinary moment.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I give my remarks under leader time and that the vote occurs immediately after.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING ROBERT PEAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I begin this morning with a heavy heart, having heard of the abrupt passing of New York Times journalist Robert Pear.

It just so happens that Robert lived on my floor in college during freshman year. While everyone else in those days had long hair and wore bell-bottoms, Robert had a flattop, was always studious, inquisitive, polite, and very decent, earning him the nickname “The Deacon.” He was the first to go into the library and the last to come out late at night. The Deacon was different from most of us but earned all of our respect.

Robert maintained the qualities of studiousness and inquisitiveness, politeness and decency throughout his personal and professional life. In my view, he represented the very best of America.

When Robert’s byline appeared on a story—and so often, his stories were on the front page, above the fold of the New York Times—the reader knew the reporting would be both important and authoritative.

His death is a loss for journalism itself. I send my condolences to his family in this moment of profound grief.

MUELLER REPORT

We all know that Leader McConnell would like to move on from the Mueller report. We know that he and many Senate Republicans are ready to say “case closed.” We all know that whether he has been bamboozled by, afraid of, worried about, or simply enamored with President Trump, Leader McConnell would prefer to sweep the entire report under the rug. So, yesterday, Leader McConnell’s speech here on the Senate floor struck me as an impassioned bit of wishful thinking that I believe the leader will regret in later days that he gave.

I am sure President Nixon wished that the investigations into Watergate would simply go away, just as I am sure President Trump wants Mueller’s investigations to fade into the background, but in the first case—President

Nixon—we had courageous Republicans who put the rule of law above simple fealty to a President, and they resisted. Unfortunately, thus far, Leader McConnell has shown none of that nobility and strength. He is simply going along with President Trump.

Just for a moment, though, let us set aside the discussion about the President’s repeated attempts to obstruct the Federal investigation. Let’s just talk about the conclusions Mueller came to about election interference in 2016, separate from his views of the investigation of Trump.

Does Leader McConnell agree that election security is a serious and ongoing challenge? Does Leader McConnell agree with FBI Director Wray that “2018 was a dress rehearsal” for foreign influence campaigns against the United States? Does the leader agree with our intelligence and law enforcement officials who are warning us right now that foreign capitals—Russia above all but perhaps Iran and China and Turkey—are gearing up to try to interfere with our elections in 2020?

This is the wellspring of our democracy. Russia may temporarily want to choose one candidate over another—as they chose Trump in 2016 and may well again—but their ultimate goal is to sow such dissension, worry, and lack of faith in our democracy that it could crumble. If everyone believes that foreigners are influencing our elections and the outcome isn’t just, that is a terrible—terrible—step downward for America that none of us wants to take.

Then why doesn’t Leader McConnell at least do something about election security, independent of President Trump—although, those investigations and hearings should go on and will. If so, if Leader McConnell believes this foreign interference in our elections is a serious problem, then he has an obligation to separate himself from his desire to shield the President from accountability and to act on this national imperative to defend our democracy from insidious and foreign attack.

Whatever Leader McConnell believes about the President’s behavior and for whatever reason, there is no reason for Leader McConnell to resist bipartisan bills like the Secure Elections Act that would harden election infrastructure. There is no reason for Leader McConnell to oppose additional funding in the appropriations process for States to safeguard their election hardware. For God’s sake, there is no good reason for Leader McConnell to resist or delay scheduling an all-Senators briefing on election threats in 2020. The only reason to do that would be false.

I hope the reason Leader McConnell is resisting strengthening and securing our elections is not because he believes Russia will help President Trump and that he is willing to let that go forward. I hope that is not true. There is no good reason on God’s green Earth why we shouldn’t be making our elections more secure, even though we may

have different views about the Mueller report.

I urge my friend the Republican leader: Disentangle yourself from the self-serving desire to sweep the Mueller report and all of its findings under the rug. Recognize that it is indisputable that Russian interference is a great threat to our elections, that the Mueller report helped corroborate and document that, and work with us. For the sake of America, Leader MCCONNELL, work with us to protect our country from foreign interference in our elections in the future. Do not—you cannot; you must not—sit on the sidelines.

DISASTER RELIEF

Madam President, on another issue, yesterday we heard Leader MCCONNELL say he would like to get a disaster relief package done by Memorial Day. Democrats in this Chamber are going to hold him to that standard, and we will make sure the package provided will have funding for all affected communities, from Hawaii all the way to Puerto Rico.

My colleagues from the Midwest and South are starting to feel the heat. According to press reports, they are going to Leader MCCONNELL and saying, “We have to get something done,” because they realize, justifiably, that with each passing week, the cost of inaction grows. Cities in Iowa have endured another round of flooding. In the South, the hurricane season is around the corner. We need to get disaster aid out the door.

When you want to know why it hasn’t happened, first and foremost, it is because President Trump disrupted a bipartisan bill that would have passed a month and a half ago and said: No aid for Puerto Rico. Second, our Republican colleagues in the Midwest and in the South willingly went along with that, thinking they could roll over Puerto Rico, roll over the House, and roll over Democrats in the Senate.

Well, now you have learned that is not happening. So work with us on a bipartisan package. We want to get it done. We want to see aid go to every part of the country, including the Midwest, including the South, including Florida, and including Texas, but Puerto Rico must be treated similarly and fairly.

I promise that we could solve this impasse in a moment. If Republicans in the Senate agree to treat Puerto Rico fairly, a disaster package will pass this Chamber like a hot knife through butter.

Our position is very simple: Democrats support a package for disaster relief that provides support for all affected Americans: Hawaii, California, Iowa, the South, the Atlantic coast, the Pacific islands, and the island of Puerto Rico, and we are not going to move forward unless everyone is included and everyone is treated fairly.

NOMINATIONS

Madam President, on nominations, today is a great example of how Leader

MCCONNELL and the Senate, in place of real legislative progress and in place of helping the middle class in this turbulent world in which we live, simply used floor time as a legislative graveyard to only rubberstamp extreme and unqualified nominees with no legislating. We have become a legislative graveyard under Leader MCCONNELL’s leadership, and the middle class and people trying to get there suffer.

This afternoon, Senate Republicans are going to confirm Janet Dhillon to be the Chair of the EEOC. This move to restore a quorum by confirming a Republican nominee, while refusing to consider Democratic nominees—which had been the Senate’s tradition to always do these nominees in a bipartisan way, one Democrat and one Republican together—is going to imperil equal pay rules and protections for LGBTQ workers.

This afternoon, the Senate will vote to end debate on the nomination of Michael Park to the Second Circuit. A quick overview of Mr. Park’s experience reveals some pretty outlandish views.

In private practice, he advanced arguments that would limit the civil rights of millions of Americans on matters pertaining to the census and educational opportunity. He represented groups in an amicus brief against the constitutionality of Medicaid expansion and worked to defend the Kansas effort to defund Planned Parenthood.

Since the Second Circuit covers my home State of New York, I met with Mr. Park to try to understand why he was being nominated for a lifetime position as a circuit court judge. Frankly, his principal qualifications seemed to be that he is a card-carrying member of the Federalist Society.

Mr. Park has little experience and little judicial background. He is an ideologue. He doesn’t have the kind of balance and integrity and compassion and understanding of both sides that any judge needs. It will be obvious to anyone who reviews his record that he lacks the breadth and objectivity that we prize in our judges, but my Republican friends, like Leader MCCONNELL, have a singular goal: to remake the Federal bench in their image. So Federalist stooges, like Mr. Park, who aren’t qualified for District Court, are being rammed through as circuit court judges.

The Senate ought to reject this confirmation. In the less partisan Senates of the past, it wouldn’t even have come forward, but, regrettably, instead of legislating, instead of doing things for the American people, all Leader MCCONNELL is doing is ramming through these nominees, most of whom are way out of the mainstream, far away from the views of most Americans, and unqualified for their jobs.

This wouldn’t have happened years ago. I hope my colleagues, when they look at Mr. Park’s record, will do the right thing.

WOMEN’S HEALTHCARE

Madam President, finally, on women’s healthcare, later today, a group of Democratic Senators will come to the floor to highlight what has been a campaign—a campaign—by Republicans to strip women of the right to make their own healthcare decisions.

At the Federal level, the latest salvo in their offensive is the title X gag rule, which would hurt low-income individuals’ access to reproductive health. In my view, this is a disgusting attempt to restrict women’s freedom. The effects of the policy are real and threaten the lives of women across America.

Take Natarsha, one of my constituents in New York. She was 33 years old when she found two lumps in her left breast. She went to see the gynecologist at Planned Parenthood. Natarsha was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent treatment. Now, praise God, more than 5 years later, her cancer is in complete remission. If not for the exams and other prevention offered by Planned Parenthood clinics across the country, Natarsha and other women like her might never have received lifesaving diagnoses, but Republicans, time and again, have pushed to defund Planned Parenthood and threatened access to the essential care it provides.

Republican-led State legislatures across the country, emboldened by President Trump, have continued their attack on the reproductive rights of women. Just last month, both South Carolina and Ohio passed bills banning abortion after only 6 weeks of pregnancy, when many women may not even know they are pregnant. Just yesterday, Georgia’s Governor signed his State’s version of that bill into law.

Since taking office, President Trump and his Republican colleagues have prioritized—prioritized—restricting women’s reproductive freedoms. They believe they know better, and they impose their views on American women. That is just wrong.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for 3 minutes to address the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK NOMINATIONS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, the Senate is finally holding long overdue votes on nominees to the Export-Import Bank of the United States. To me, this is about Ohio businesses; this is about American workers; and this is about the dignity of work. All three of these nominees are qualified.

For nearly 4 years, the Export-Import Bank has been forced to stop most of the work supporting American jobs. A small group of opponents, supported by special interests in this town, tried to kill this bank altogether. Ex-Im has been paralyzed because of leadership in

this body and because of the President and the Vice President of the United States. The Bank is technically open but can't approve any transaction greater than \$10 million.

The Senate's inaction, the President's inaction, and the Vice President's inaction have hurt Ohio manufacturers. In the past, Ohio companies exported more than \$400 million a year in products using Export-Import Bank credit assistance. That amount has been cut nearly in half. That means jobs. It means good-paying industrial jobs. If the President and Republicans in Congress were serious about helping American manufacturers after years and years of obstruction, which they have done, they would approve these nominees and work with us to authorize the Bank this summer.

My colleagues have a choice: Do they care about these businesses; do they care about manufacturing; do they care about workers; do they care about the dignity of workers; or do they care more about their extreme special interest politics?

I stand with our workers. I will vote to reopen the Export-Import Bank.

Thank you.

VOTE ON BIANCO NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Bianco nomination?

Mr. ROUNDS. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 99 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blackburn	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hawley	Roberts
Braun	Hoeven	Romney
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Capito	Inhofe	Rubio
Cassidy	Isakson	Sasse
Collins	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Jones	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Kennedy	Shelby
Cramer	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Manchin	Tillis
Daines	McConnell	Toomey
Enzi	McSally	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Blumenthal	Cantwell
Bennet	Brown	Cardin

Carper	Kaine	Schatz
Casey	King	Schumer
Coons	Leahy	Shaheen
Cortez Masto	Markey	Smith
Duckworth	Menendez	Stabenow
Durbin	Merkley	Tester
Feinstein	Murphy	Udall
Gillibrand	Murray	Van Hollen
Harris	Peters	Warner
Hassan	Reed	Warren
Heinrich	Rosen	Whitehouse
Hirono	Sanders	Wyden

NOT VOTING—4

Booker	Murkowski
Klobuchar	Sinema

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the remaining votes in the series be 10 minutes in length.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON THE REED NOMINATION

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Kimberly A. Reed, of West Virginia, to be President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2021.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Reed nomination.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 79, nays 17, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 100 Ex.]

YEAS—79

Alexander	Ernst	Moran
Baldwin	Feinstein	Murphy
Bennet	Fischer	Murray
Blumenthal	Gardner	Paul
Blunt	Gillibrand	Perdue
Boozman	Graham	Peters
Brown	Harris	Portman
Burr	Hassan	Reed
Cantwell	Heinrich	Risch
Capito	Hirono	Roberts
Cardin	Hoeven	Romney
Carper	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Casey	Isakson	Rounds
Cassidy	Johnson	Schatz
Collins	Jones	Schumer
Coons	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	King	Scott (SC)
Cortez Masto	Leahy	Shaheen
Cotton	Manchin	Smith
Cramer	Markey	Stabenow
Crapo	McConnell	Sullivan
Duckworth	McSally	Tester
Durbin	Menendez	Thune
Enzi	Merkley	Tillis

Udall	Warren	Wyden
Van Hollen	Whitehouse	
Warner	Wicker	

NAYS—17

Barrasso	Hawley	Sanders
Blackburn	Inhofe	Sasse
Braun	Kennedy	Shelby
Cruz	Lankford	Toomey
Daines	Lee	Young
Grassley	Rubio	

NOT VOTING—4

Booker	Murkowski
Klobuchar	Sinema

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON BACHUS NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the Bachus nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Spencer Bachus III, of Alabama, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2023.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Bachus nomination?

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 72, nays 22, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 101 Ex.]

YEAS—72

Alexander	Ernst	Peters
Baldwin	Feinstein	Portman
Bennet	Fischer	Reed
Blumenthal	Gardner	Risch
Blunt	Graham	Roberts
Boozman	Hassan	Romney
Brown	Heinrich	Rosen
Burr	Hirono	Rounds
Cantwell	Hoeven	Schatz
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schumer
Cardin	Isakson	Scott (FL)
Carper	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Casey	Jones	Shaheen
Cassidy	Kaine	Smith
Collins	King	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Sullivan
Cornyn	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	McConnell	Thune
Cotton	McSally	Tillis
Cramer	Menendez	Udall
Crapo	Moran	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Wicker
Enzi	Perdue	Wyden

NAYS—22

Barrasso	Gillibrand	Kennedy
Blackburn	Grassley	Lankford
Braun	Harris	Lee
Cruz	Hawley	Markey
Daines	Inhofe	Merkley

Paul	Shelby	Young
Rubio	Toomey	
Sasse	Warren	

NOT VOTING—6

Booker	Murkowski	Sinema
Klobuchar	Sanders	Whitehouse

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON PRYOR NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the Pryor nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Judith DelZoppo Pryor, of Ohio, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2021.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Pryor nomination?

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 77, nays 19, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 102 Ex.]

YEAS—77

Alexander	Fischer	Peters
Baldwin	Gardner	Portman
Bennet	Gillibrand	Reed
Blumenthal	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Harris	Roberts
Boozman	Hassan	Romney
Brown	Heinrich	Rosen
Burr	Hirono	Rounds
Cantwell	Hoeven	Schatz
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Schumer
Cardin	Isakson	Scott (FL)
Carper	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Casey	Jones	Shaheen
Cassidy	Kaine	Smith
Collins	King	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Tester
Cornyn	Manchin	Thune
Cortez Masto	Markey	Tillis
Cotton	McConnell	Udall
Cramer	McSally	Van Hollen
Crapo	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Durbin	Moran	Whitehouse
Enzi	Murphy	Wicker
Ernst	Murray	Wyden
Feinstein	Perdue	

NAYS—19

Barrasso	Inhofe	Sasse
Blackburn	Kennedy	Shelby
Braun	Lankford	Sullivan
Cruz	Lee	Toomey
Daines	Paul	Young
Grassley	Rubio	
Hawley	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—4

Booker	Murkowski
Klobuchar	Sinema

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid

upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Janet Dhillon, of Pennsylvania, to be a Member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2022.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Janet Dhillon, of Pennsylvania, to be a Member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2022.

Mitch McConnell, Lamar Alexander, Tim Scott, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, Roy Blunt, David Perdue, John Thune, Pat Roberts, Johnny Isakson, John Cornyn, Thom Tillis, John Boozman, Mike Rounds, Richard Burr.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Janet Dhillon, of Pennsylvania, to be a member of the Equal Opportunity Commission for a term expiring July 1, 2022, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 103 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Alexander	Daines	Lee
Barrasso	Enzi	McConnell
Blackburn	Ernst	McSally
Blunt	Fischer	Moran
Boozman	Gardner	Paul
Braun	Graham	Perdue
Burr	Grassley	Portman
Capito	Hawley	Risch
Cassidy	Hoeven	Roberts
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Cornyn	Inhofe	Rounds
Cotton	Isakson	Rubio
Cramer	Johnson	Sasse
Crapo	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Cruz	Lankford	Scott (SC)

Shelby	Tillis	Young
Sullivan	Toomey	
Thune	Wicker	

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Hassan	Rosen
Bennet	Heinrich	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Jones	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Harris	Reed	

NOT VOTING—4

Booker	Murkowski
Klobuchar	Sinema

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 52, the nays are 44.

The motion is agreed to.

The majority whip.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, we reached a milestone last week with the confirmation of President Trump's 100th Federal judge, and, frankly, it is a milestone that should have come earlier. Had this been another President, it almost undoubtedly would have come earlier. But, unfortunately, the response to this President has been characterized by what the leader aptly referred to yesterday as "unhinged partisanship."

Now, 2½ years on from President Trump's election, Democrats still can't get over the fact that they lost. Somehow, my colleagues missed the section in government class where you learn that is what happens sometimes in democracies. Sometimes you win. Sometimes—and I hate to break it to my colleagues—sometimes you lose. It is not fun. No one likes having their candidate lose, but that is what happens sometimes when you have free elections.

No one expects Democrats to just sign on to everything President Trump says or does. No one expects them to sign on to most of what President Trump says or does. I certainly understand that they have philosophical disagreements with many of his policies. I have been in their position. During my time in public office, there have certainly been Presidents with whom I disagreed a substantial part of the time. I like to think that I didn't reflexively oppose everything they said or did simply because they weren't my preferred candidate for the office. I am fairly certain President Trump couldn't eat a cheese sandwich without some Democrat crying treason.

Well, let's step back a minute. Maybe it is not that my Democratic colleagues are reflexively opposing everything this President does. Maybe it is not unhinged partisanship. Maybe it is just that they disagree with every single word he says, every single thing he does, and every single individual he nominates—except in the case of nominees, at least, we know that isn't true.

Let's go back to those judicial nominations. Democrats have engaged in a

truly unprecedented amount of obstruction on President Trump's judicial nominees. As of May 2, Democrats have forced cloture votes on almost 65 percent of President Trump's judicial nominees—65 percent. At the same point in President Obama's first term, Republicans had required cloture votes on just 2½ percent of his judicial nominees—65 percent to 2½ percent. But, again, maybe that is because Democrats have serious philosophical objections to these nominees—except they don't, because again and again, Democrats have turned around and voted for the Trump judicial nominees they obstructed.

One egregious example occurred in January of 2018 when Democrats forced the Senate to spend more than a week considering four district court judges even though not one single Democrat voted against their confirmation. That is right. Democrats forced the Senate to spend more than a week considering the nomination of four judges even though not one single Democrat opposed their confirmation. These judges could have been confirmed in a matter of minutes by voice vote, but Democrats forced the Senate to spend more than a week on their consideration—time that could have been spent on genuinely controversial nominees or on some of the many important issues facing our country.

As of April 2 of this year, Democrats have forced cloture votes on 20 of the district court judges the Senate has confirmed. Ultimately, however, 19 of those 20 judges were confirmed by more than 68 votes. Now, 17 of those 20 were confirmed by more than 80 votes, and 12 of those 20 were confirmed without a single vote in opposition. Yet Democrats obstructed all of them.

One hundred judicial nominees confirmed is a solid milestone, but, as I said before, it is a milestone that should have come earlier and would have come earlier if Democrats hadn't chosen to engage in a massive campaign of partisan obstruction. Despite a lot of hard work by the Judiciary Committee and a robust pace of nominations from the President, the number of judicial vacancies is actually 25 percent higher today than it was when the President took office, and a near record number of those vacancies are designated as judicial emergencies. That shouldn't be the case, but thanks to Democrats' knee-jerk obstruction, that is where we are.

Regardless of how much the Democrats obstruct, though, Republicans will keep moving forward. Despite Democrats' best efforts, we confirmed a record number of circuit court judges during the President's first 2 years, and we are going to keep working our way through the President's nominees, judicial and otherwise. We are committed to filling vacancies in both the executive branch and the judiciary so that the American people have the fully functioning government they deserve.

Perhaps someday Democrats will decide to drop the obstruction and to join

us in the business of actually getting things done for the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF JANET DHILLON

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is charged with protecting workers and job applicants against discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information.

Janet Dhillon, the latest nominee to be a member of that board, has spent her career, unfortunately, doing the opposite. She has spent years advocating for corporations over workers and has a track record that puts her in direct opposition to the mission of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. For example, under Ms. Dhillon's leadership, the Retail Litigation Center filed briefs in support of policies making it more difficult for employers to be held liable for harassment.

I am also concerned that Ms. Dhillon has declined to answer whether she would uphold the EEOC's current position that the Civil Rights Act forbids employment discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation. The EEOC is considering issues that are critical to protecting workers, including ongoing court cases to protect LGBTQ workers from discrimination and improve pay data collection for women in the workforce. Women, on average, make 80 cents per every dollar earned by a man. The gap is even higher for women of color. We need Commissioners at the EEOC who will fight to close this gap.

No matter your age, race, occupation, religion, or sexuality, you should be treated with dignity, and for too long, with too many people, this has not been the case. Ms. Dhillon has not demonstrated that she will be a champion for these workers.

In the past, we have always tried to move EEOC nominations in a bipartisan way, with Democratic and Republican nominees confirmed at the same time, but for months, for reasons I cannot explain, my Republican colleagues have refused to hold a vote on a Democratic nominee to this Commission. This obstruction has forced the EEOC to operate without a quorum, preventing it from conducting crucial business, such as issuing new policies, guidance, and regulations.

This is another example of Republicans changing Senate norms and traditions when it comes to their quest for nominations. We are also seeing that

this week with votes on two Second Circuit nominees from New York who are being pushed through over objections by both home State Senators. Before this year, we had never, never seen a judicial nominee receive a vote without a positive blue slip from either home State Senator.

"Blue slip" is just a formal term; it is actually an approval by the Senator of a nomination.

By the end of this week, it will have happened four times—in the State of Washington, New Jersey, and now New York. This is a terrible precedent that could end up affecting each of our States.

Republicans appear determined to ignore traditions and common sense in their effort to confirm the highest possible volume of President Trump's extreme nominees. I continue to call on my colleagues to change course. I think it is a mistake.

I oppose Janet Dhillon's nomination as Chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

Mr. President, last month, on Friday, April 12, I visited the port of entry in El Paso, TX, that is known as Paso Del Norte and a nearby Border Patrol station known as Station No. 1. What I saw was heartbreaking.

The migrants who presented themselves at our border are being detained in cramped cells known as *hieleras*, Spanish for the word "iceboxes." These are metal-sided detention rooms, which the detainees complain are kept painfully cold. The sign above one of these detention room doors reads "Capacity: 35." I took a few minutes and counted the number of men in that cell. Capacity may have been 35, but there were over 150 men standing in that cell and maybe one toilet. The large, heavy glass window on the cell gave a clear view of the detainees. But for a few benches along the walls, which accommodate a very small number, there is literally no room to sit or lie down. Meals are provided to the standing migrants to eat in the cell. Many will wait for up to 3 weeks in this so-called icebox to be transferred to an ICE facility.

Next to it was a woman's cell that has a sign reading "Capacity: 16." I paused and counted about 75 women in a cell designed for 16, including nursing mothers with their babies. As our eyes would lock, some of the women would mouth the word "help."

Just outside this building, hundreds of men and women and children who were brought in from the border hours before stood in long lines. These migrants are at the end of a long and dangerous journey, and this preliminary process led them to a table where four officials were writing down information. The approach was clearly designed to be slow, and it was clearly understaffed.

I stood in line with a translator speaking to those who were waiting. One was a young mother holding a 1-

year-old child. She told me of taking 4 weeks—1 month—to escape Honduras and to cross Mexico to escape the narco gangsters in her country. Another young Honduran woman, pregnant and obviously close to delivering, stood patiently in line. The young father-to-be hovered behind her, holding two disposable diapers. The previous night, they had come to our border looking for protection. I asked them why, in her condition, she would make such a journey. She told me she was threatened with not only her death but the death of her infant if her husband refused to work with the drug gangs in Honduras. As a result, she told me her family sold absolutely everything they had to pay for the transporters—also known as smugglers or coyotes—to transport them across Mexico to our border.

Included in the omnibus appropriations bill that we wrote this year was more than \$400 million for humanitarian assistance for the border. We could do so much more even in the midst of our political debate—so much more to treat these desperate people in a humane way.

I am sorry to report that I do not believe the detention facilities that we have for detained migrants could possibly pass any inspection by the International Red Cross. We are America. We are better than this.

It is clear the Trump administration's border security policies have failed. They have destabilized the region, encouraged more migration, and are driving more families into the arms of human traffickers. The Trump administration has shut down legal avenues for vulnerable families and children fleeing persecution.

There was a program called the Central American Minors Program under President Obama. It was straightforward. Children and certain relatives seeking protection who lived in a country such as Honduras could present themselves in-country at the consulate, fill out the forms, and determine whether they were eligible for refugee status or humanitarian parole. These children and family members didn't have to make a dangerous journey, liquidate everything they owned on Earth, and risk their lives. President Trump closed down that program. Why? Wouldn't you want them to learn their status, if they could, in their country of origin?

Migrants fleeing persecution are also being blocked from using legal ports of entry. They have been forced to use human traffickers to cross the border illegally. They may have gone through ports of entry and presented themselves, but when we started queuing them up and limiting the number each day, some of them, in desperation, went to present themselves at the border between ports of entry. Make no mistake. This is not an invasion, as the President has described over and over. This is actually a person making his or her way across that desert land and presenting themselves voluntarily to

the first person in an American uniform.

The President terminated temporary protected status for El Salvador and Honduras, which could force a quarter of a million people back to these countries—exactly the opposite of what we should be doing at this moment.

The President has also proposed slashing the humanitarian and security assistance to the Northern Triangle. That is illogical. The notion that we would cut off funds to these desperate countries that lack civil government and that are controlled by drug gangs will make the situation worse. It will make these people more desperate.

The President is doing and saying exactly the opposite of what he should be saying. I understand his emotion. We see it regularly. I understand his anger, but someone should sit down with him and explain to him that he is making the matter worse. Each of these policy mistakes could be reversed by the President immediately. Let's not forget that just a few short months ago, the President shut down the Federal Government in his desperate pursuit of taxpayer-funded border walls so he could fulfill a campaign promise. We all remember, of course, that Mexico was supposed to pay for this wall. That has been forgotten by most, but not by those of us who have a memory of the last campaign.

Did you realize that while the government was shut down, the President shut down the immigration courts? In not paying or not allowing them to meet the immigration court backlog, it started growing, making the situation even worse. Every time the President's emotion takes over on immigration, his instincts are 180 degrees off course. When the President blocks all assistance to the Northern Triangle countries—Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador—and shuts down avenues to legal migration, he guarantees that more refugees will flee to our border. When he talks about “dumping” these migrants into sanctuary cities, he shows contempt for these human beings and their plight. When he uses words like “murderers,” “rapists,” and “invasion,” he appeals to base emotions of fear and hate. At every turn, the President has responded to this heartbreaking humanitarian challenge at the border with threats and meanness that only makes the matter worse.

When Attorney General Barr is not busy trying to make the Justice Department the President's personal law firm, he is enthusiastically carrying out Attorney General Sessions' and Secretary Nielsen's legacy of failed immigration policies.

One year ago, on May 7, 2018, then-Attorney General Sessions made an announcement. He announced that the Department of Homeland Security was referring 100 percent of the border cases to the Justice Department to be prosecuted under criminal statutes, under what they characterized as the

“zero-tolerance” policy. The targets of those prosecutions included mothers seeking safety from gang violence and domestic violence.

We know the result. I remember that last August I went to an immigration court in Chicago. I didn't know it was there. It was in the Loop, downtown, in an office building, and one whole floor was dedicated to a U.S. immigration court. This was after the announcement of the zero-tolerance policy. I could barely get off the elevator. The hallways were packed for the hearings that were scheduled. It was a long, long docket.

I went into the courtroom before it started and sat down with the immigration court judge who had been on the job for almost two decades. I believe she is a caring person who really wanted to follow the law and do it in a thoughtful, humane way. She asked me if I wanted to stay for the first docket call. I said I would.

So I watched as she asked everyone in the courtroom to take their seats before the two clients who would be called first. One of these clients had difficulty getting into the chair. Maria was 2 years old. She wasn't old enough to climb in the chair by herself. She had been separated from her parent under this policy announced by Attorney General Sessions. So they lifted her up and put her in the chair and handed her a stuffed animal that she clung to. She obviously didn't understand a thing about what was happening in that room—2 years old and in an immigration court of the United States.

The other client was much more agile. He was able to get into the chair. His name was Hamilton, and he was 4 years old. The reason he scrambled into the chair is that he saw a Matchbox car on top of the table.

Those were, I believe, the first two clients under the zero-tolerance policy in a Chicago courtroom. Can we possibly be proud of that? Were those children separated from their mothers and fathers in an effort to deter others from coming to the United States? Is that what this was all about?

It didn't take long for President Trump to abandon the zero-tolerance policy. Thankfully, after a few months, a Federal judge in San Diego, CA, said: That is it. Reunite those kids with their parents.

It turned out that there were more than 2,800 of these children who had been separated from their parents. Some of them are still in the system. Even after several months the government was unable to locate their families so the children could be reunited with them. There have been hints by the President that he is going to return to that policy. Really? Really? Is that what America is all about—snatching children away from their parents?

Those who are experts in the area, psychologists and doctors, tell us that this could have a long-term dramatic negative impact on a baby. It is understandable. I have seen cases and met

the mothers, when, finally, after months they were reunited and the child wanted nothing to do with them, feeling that they had been abandoned by their parents. America is better than that.

In an investigation by the inspector general of Health and Human Services that I requested with Senator PATTY MURRAY, it now turns out that 1 year ago, even before the announcement of zero tolerance, thousands of kids may have been separated by this same administration, and we still don't know their plight. The Federal judge in San Diego has once again asked for a human accounting of what happened to those kids.

I stand ready to work with my Republican friends on smart, effective, and humane border security, but we need the Trump administration to drop the cruel campaign of targeting families and children and focus on the real threats to America—the lethal narcotics that still flood our communities, 80 to 90 percent which come through ports of entry that we were discussing today.

In the last Congress, Democrats introduced the Central America Reform and Enforcement Act as a comprehensive response to the problem. The bill addresses measures like the root causes of migration from the Northern Triangle countries. If our laws are so bad and so welcoming to people who shouldn't be here, why is it that overwhelmingly these people are coming from three countries? They are not coming from Mexico or other Central American countries. There is something going on in these three countries—Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador—that needs to be addressed. We need to crack down on the cartels and the traffickers.

Make no mistake. Our thirst and appetite for narcotics coming into this country has created a cycle of violence and death. As we purchase the narcotics and send drug money back to the cartels in Central America and Mexico, that money fuels their further efforts to export narcotics to the United States, as well the export of firearms. The GAO found that seventy percent of the guns confiscated and traced in Mexico came from the United States, most purchased legally in gun shops and at gun shows. In the name of the Second Amendment and not doing a background check, we are literally arming the drug cartels that are terrorizing people in Central America.

We have to put two and two together. We have to expand third-country resettlement in Mexico and other Central American countries. We have to have in-country processing of refugees, as I mentioned earlier, and we have to eliminate the immigration court backlog.

I will be introducing legislation soon to achieve these goals. I am willing to work with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to address this crisis on our border.

Mr. President, there is no one else on the floor to speak. I ask unanimous consent to address another subject for the record.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, everyone knows that this Sunday is Mother's Day, a day when we honor our moms, step moms, our mothers-in-law, our grandmothers, our wives and all the women who chose to love, sacrifice, and care for a child. It is also a day when we celebrate new moms-to-be. I am happy to report to you that I am just a few days away from having a new granddaughter, which I am really excited about. There is a lot of excitement and happiness in our family, and it will be intensified coming this Sunday on Mother's Day.

My wife and I have three beautiful kids, and we have now five wonderful grandchildren, with a sixth one on the way. There is nothing more exciting than learning of a new addition to your family, and there is nothing more sobering than the state of maternal and infant healthcare in this great Nation. I can think of no better way to celebrate and honor Mother's Day than to immediately commit on a bipartisan basis to enact change that will improve the health outcomes for new moms and babies nationwide. Too often in our country, new moms and infants, especially women and babies of color, are dying from completely preventable health complications.

Listen to this. The United States is 1 of only 13 countries in the world where the maternal mortality rate is worse today than it was 25 years ago. Over the past 30 years, our maternal mortality rate has more than doubled. In the United States of America, with all of our hospitals and doctors and medical knowledge, nationwide more than 700 women die every year as a result of pregnancy. More than 70,000 experience severe, near-fatal complications. In my home State of Illinois, 73 women die every year due to pregnancy-related complications, and 70 percent of these deaths are preventable.

These deaths impact women of color at significantly higher rates. Black women in the United States are three to four times more likely than White women to die as a result of pregnancy. In Illinois, African-American women are six times more likely than White women to die of pregnancy-related complications.

I had a press conference at a University of Chicago hospital on this subject. One of the presenters had done even deeper research than we had in preparation, and she reported to me something that really opened my eyes. This racial distinction bears no relation to poverty or education. An African-American woman, well educated, from a family with resources, is still just as vulnerable as those in a lesser position economically when it comes to this racial disparity. Not only are

we losing moms, we are losing babies. This is incredible.

Currently the United States ranks 32 out of 35 of the wealthiest nations when it comes to infant mortality. Every year more than 23,000 infants die in this country, largely due to factors that, in many cases, can be prevented—birth defects, low birth weight, and maternal complications. Again, the African-American community is impacted more severely. In the United States, babies of color are twice as likely to die as White babies. The racial disparity is greater than it was in the year 1850 in the United States. Something has to be done.

I joined with Congresswoman ROBIN KELLY of Illinois and my colleague Senator TAMMY DUCKWORTH, and we introduced the appropriately named MOMMA Act.

First and foremost, our bill would expand the length of time that a new mom can keep her Medicaid health coverage.

Currently, Medicaid has to cover women for only 2 months postpartum. Our bill expands it to a year. Given that 60 percent of maternal deaths occur in the weeks and months after delivery, it is imperative that new mothers be able to keep their health coverage longer.

Next, the MOMMA's Act would improve access to doulas. Too often, disparities in maternal and infant mortality are rooted in structural racism in healthcare, meaning African-American women often receive poorer quality care than White women simply because of the color of their skin. Black women are not often listened to or taken seriously by healthcare providers. Doulas can help provide education, advocacy, and support for women whose voices are being ignored.

To this point, our bill would also improve implicit bias and cultural competency training among healthcare providers.

Lastly, our bill would provide improved hospital coordination reporting on maternal health outcomes and ensure implementation of services to improve care.

My bill is not the only one on this subject. Senator KAMALA HARRIS has introduced a bill to help train medical providers to avoid racial bias. Senator ELIZABETH WARREN suggests giving hospitals a financial bonus for successful health outcome improvements. Senator CORY has a bill to improve access to primary care providers and doulas. Senator KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND has a bill to provide States and hospitals with needed funding to develop and implement maternal safety best practices. There is no shortage of legislative ideas that would help improve maternal and infant health outcomes. Yet, unfortunately, we are not considering them.

We even changed the rules in the Senate a few weeks ago, and the Republican leader came to the floor and said we need more time for legislation.

There has not been much legislation going on in this Senate in the last few weeks.

Would it not be nice if we had a good, bipartisan bill that addresses this issue of maternal and infant mortality in time for Mother's Day? There is still time tomorrow for the leader, Senator MCCONNELL, to call this measure to the floor, and I hope he will.

We have to make sure as well—and I will close by saying this—that the Affordable Care Act continues to be a strong opportunity for people to have access to affordable, quality healthcare and to make certain that the lawsuit that emanated from the State of Texas and is now working its way through the Federal courts does not take protection away from Americans with pre-existing conditions. That continues to be a threat we have to take seriously.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, it is rare to find Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, and USA TODAY editors all in agreement, but they are all on the same page when it comes to Senator SANDERS' radical scheme for a complete takeover of healthcare in America. All three papers say that the Democrats' single-payer plan—a one-size-fits-all plan for America—is a bad idea. Remember, it is not just Senator SANDERS' plan; nearly every Senate Democrat who is running for President has supported this extreme proposal, as have 180 Members of the House of Representatives.

Post, Journal, and USA TODAY editors are citing last week's report by the Congressional Budget Office as raising a number of alarm bells. USA TODAY calls it a pipe dream. The Post charges Senator SANDERS with deeply misrepresenting how difficult it would be to adopt single-payer healthcare for America. They called it costly. They called it complicated and expensive. The CBO projects in its report on a single-payer plan that government spending on healthcare would increase substantially. They go on to say that to cover the massive cost of government-run care—the Journal says that income taxes of American families would have to at least double.

Added to the expense is the shock of banning virtually all private insurance in this country. There are 180 million working Americans who receive their health insurance through work. Outlawing private health plans would cause a serious disruption, forcing 180 million Americans—working families—from their employer-sponsored health insurance coverage.

The Washington Post notes that these employer-provided plans cover most Americans under the age of 65. The Journal says that any savings would have to come from where the money is, which is cutting payments to doctors and restricting care—restricting care. That restricts treatment as

well as new technologies. Lower reimbursement rates could drive many doctors from practice and shutter many small hospitals in my rural communities and in your rural State, Mr. President. We are talking about problems in our rural communities all across America. The result would be longer wait times and lower quality of care.

To quote the Post, "No matter what Senator SANDERS says, there is no Medicare for all without tradeoffs." Mark my words—Medicare for all would soon become Medicare for none. Democrats' one-size-fits-all healthcare plan—a one-size-fits-all healthcare plan would mean that you would pay more to wait longer for worse care. You would pay more to wait longer for worse care. That is what one-size-fits-all healthcare looks like for Americans, for people all across the country.

This single-payer plan means major tax hikes to cover massive costs. It means much longer lines for lower quality care. It means the elimination of private health insurance for Americans. It also means the end of the Medicare Program that seniors rely upon and so many depend on, on a daily basis. That is where I want to focus some of my remarks today—our seniors' healthcare needs and why it is so important to protect their Medicare benefits that they have paid into over their entire working lives.

For seniors today, there are 60 million of them who rely on the Medicare Program. Medicare is nothing less than a medical lifeline. Yet, if the Democrats impose socialized medicine on the entire country, seniors will quickly find Medicare replaced by a massive, new, government-run, one-size-fits-all program—a system that lowers the quality of care for them and makes it harder to get the care they need.

These older Americans worked hard their entire lives, put in the effort, and each month or each week had money deducted from their paychecks that went into paying for Medicare. They have paid into this Medicare system for decades. The average for a couple in America—they have paid in about \$160,000 in terms of withdrawals from their paychecks over the course of their working lives. They deserve nothing less than what they paid for, that they paid into.

For more than 50 years, Medicare has helped countless seniors live healthier, more productive lives. Does Medicare face challenges? Absolutely. There is no question about that. But ending Medicare as we know it would not solve our healthcare problems; it would simply make them much worse—certainly for the 60 million Americans currently on Medicare.

I have seen Medicare's value as a doctor. While practicing medicine in Wyoming for decades, I saw firsthand how effective Medicare is in helping patients receive the care they need.

Now, as a Senator, I talk with seniors back home in Wyoming all of the time

and listen to their healthcare concerns. The week before last, I was at two different health fairs in Wyoming, where people can go for low-cost blood screenings and learn more about diabetes, stroke, heart disease, and proper diet. I visited with people in Rawlins, WY, and Mountain View, WY. Hundreds of people came out. There were 1,500 people at the Rawlins health fair.

People in Wyoming actually know me as a doctor first and as a Senator second, and above all, they count on me to protect their Medicare. That is my concern with this one-size-fits-all approach the Democrats have been proposing. People in Wyoming want to make sure that I keep Medicare strong, keep fighting for them, because the current system allows them to get to the doctor they need.

In Wyoming, where people live far away and the hospitals are few and far between, we know that with a program like this—and certainly from the CBO report last week—small hospitals will very likely close.

Almost 90 percent of Medicare patients say that they like the program and that it works well for them. There is nearly 90 percent approval. Members of the Senate would be astonished and happy with those sorts of approval numbers for themselves. It is a program that is working for them, and now what is being proposed by the Democrats is going to absolutely have devastating effects on Medicare and our patients on Medicare.

We need to do more to lower the cost of care for all Americans, but we need to protect Medicare. To put all of these new people on a Medicare Program is going to make it that much harder for our seniors who are currently on Medicare.

Medicare partners with private health insurers to provide seniors with better, more affordable care. It is a program called Medicare Advantage. There are 22 million American seniors who are on this Medicare Advantage Program. Nobody forces them to sign up; they choose it simply because, as the name implies, there are advantages to participating in Medicare Advantage in terms of preventive care and in terms of coordinating care. Our seniors look at these plans and say: You know, that is right for me. It provides value for my money. I enjoy what I get.

So it is no surprise that since 2010—things came along, and ObamaCare was passed—the number of seniors in Medicare Advantage has more than doubled, because it is a good program for them. Nevertheless, all 22 million people currently on Medicare Advantage would lose Medicare Advantage if the Democrats' one-size-fits-all approach to healthcare—which 180 Members of the House have cosponsored and which the Senate Democrat candidates for President are cosponsoring—were to pass. But that is what the Democrats are proposing—taking Medicare Advantage away from 22 million Americans.

In January, I joined a bipartisan group of Senators in sending a letter to

the Centers for Medicare & Medicare Services urging support for Medicare Advantage. Ironically, 6 of the 22 Democrats who signed this letter have now flip-flopped back to this far-extreme-left proposal to outlaw private health insurance in America. That is what they are running for President on and promoting today.

Medicare works with private insurers to make seniors' prescription drugs more affordable as well. This program is called Medicare Part D. More than 43 million seniors participate in Part D plans. Again, it is voluntary. How do we know it must be a good program? Because that many people see value in the program, and they have signed up for it. Can we improve the prescription drug program? Absolutely. We are working right now to lower prescription drug costs. We have already eliminated the gag order, where pharmacists couldn't talk to patients. We have done the right thing there.

So why are the far-left Democrats attempting to destroy private health plans? I mean, it is astonishing. Why do they want to end Medicare as we know it? Why do they want to turn Medicare for our seniors into Medicare for None?

Well, while "free healthcare" may make for a catchy campaign slogan, it is unfair to deceive the American people, especially our seniors. To quote the editor of the Wall Street Journal, "Voters should know Sanders is promising miracles when what he'll deliver is poorer care for everyone."

So here we have it. The Congressional Budget Office came out with its study about what the impacts will be. The Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, USA TODAY—all of them say this is not right for America.

Let's be clear. All Americans will pay a high price for Democrats' one-size-fits-all, government-run healthcare scheme, and I actually think seniors may suffer the most. It is clear to me that with a one-size-fits-all healthcare plan, people will pay more to wait longer for worse care.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

(The remarks of Ms. SMITH pertaining to the introduction of S. 1359 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROMNEY). The Senator from Texas.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday the Senate Judiciary Committee held a very important hearing on how we can bring down prescription drug prices for American families without sacrificing the innovation that has made our country a world leader in new drug development. That is quite a challenging balance to strike.

As I travel my State, I have heard from my constituents about their increasing inability to get their hands on

the medications they need at a price they can afford—not because no treatment exists, not because they don't have insurance, and not even because it is a pricey, brandnew drug. Patients can't afford their prescriptions because the prices are going up at an alarming rate, with little evidence or justification to back some of the price hikes.

I heard from one Texas pharmacist who was shocked by the dramatic price increase of drugs that had been available for years. She told me about one popular antibiotic that once cost \$3 for 1,000 tabs. She said now it costs more than \$1,200 for the same amount—\$3 to \$1,200. What is the justification for that? Well, we are left to wonder and speculate, and that is part of the reason for the investigation being undertaken now by the Finance Committee and other Senate committees.

These costs have been so overwhelming that some of my constituents will cross the border to go to Mexico to try to buy prescription drugs there. A man from Rockport, TX, told me one of his prescriptions cost about \$1,000 each month in the United States. But if he drives a few hours to Mexico, he can get what he thinks is that same medication from what he thinks is the same manufacturer for about \$160—\$1,000 versus \$160. Of course, what we don't know is whether it is a counterfeit, whether it is not only ineffective to deal with the condition that he is taking the medicine for but whether it might poison him. So this is a challenging issue with no easy answers.

I know one thing. I know my constituents are frustrated by these confusing price hikes. They don't understand the dramatic price differences from one retailer to another, and I have heard them loud and clear because I don't understand it either. We know that something needs to be done to rein in the high costs before medication becomes a luxury only for those who can afford it.

Since the beginning of this new Congress, the Senate Finance Committee has held a series of hearings to examine what is behind these rising costs. We have heard from all of the major players in the supply chain and asked some long overdue questions.

The Senate Judiciary Committee has begun looking into how to bring these prices down, specifically by stopping pharmaceutical companies who game the patent system. Patents play a very important role in our economy. They are recognized in the Constitution itself, and when somebody discovers something new and wonderful that helps improve all our lives, they are entitled to reap the benefits from that.

Companies, we know, pour extensive time and funding into the research and development of new medications. For example, yesterday, Dr. Jim Allison from MD Anderson Hospital was in to see me. He recently got the Nobel Prize for his research in immunology and new treatments for cancer. Over the course of our history, the treatments

for cancer have been almost as tough as the cancer itself, whether it is surgery or radiation or chemotherapy. What he has discovered—thanks to the grants by NIH that have helped pay for the research—is a new way to use the body to turn on the cancer itself without the patient receiving additional drugs or radiation or surgery to deal with it. It is just amazing. So I do think we need to continue to encourage that sort of innovation and research. And when companies do pour extensive time and funding into that research and a patent allows them to recover that funding once the drug hits the market, that is a good thing.

We are increasingly seeing some companies abuse this system in order to retain exclusivity over a drug for much longer than the patent would ordinarily provide and preventing more affordable generics or biosimilars from entering the market and competing. From what I have been told by some in the pharmaceutical industry, about 90 percent of the common prescriptions that we take are now generic, and they are pretty inexpensive, relatively speaking. I know that is the case for me, and I believe that is likely true. But for the 10 percent that are still branded, some of those drug prices go through the roof.

Then you have an aberration like insulin that has been available for decades, which, through some sort of mystery, an opaque way of pricing, still may cost somebody as much as \$1,000 or \$1,200 a month for their copay. That doesn't make any sense to me because if we are trying to protect innovation, that argument no longer applies to a drug long ago discovered and essential to the life of diabetics.

The chemical formula of the actual drug is not the only thing that can be patented, and that is part of the problem. Manufacturers can get additional patents for follow-on inventions or innovation, which is a new manufacturing method or a new formulation or a new application to a new and different disease. Some of that, I think, is certainly understandable and should be protected. I don't believe that each of these additional patents is inherently wrong, but the reckless abuse of the system and the way they can be structured sometimes is.

I will be introducing a bill soon that aims to curb major drug companies' anti-competitive use of patents to prevent generics or biosimilars from entering the market to promote greater competition and lower prices. This legislation would properly define two terms to describe how drug companies are abusing the system and provide the Federal Trade Commission with authority to take action.

The first term it would define is "product hopping," which occurs when a company develops a reformulation of a product that is about to lose exclusivity and then pulls the original product off the market, preventing entry of a generic alternative. This may be just

by releasing a new formulation that is extended release over time. They can patent that and pull the original drug off the market, and then it prohibits generic competition from entering the market against that original formulation and, thus, maintain their exclusivity well beyond the intended period of time. The only purpose for doing this is not to deliver more effective drugs but to prevent that generic competition.

One example is the drug Namenda, which is used by patients with Alzheimer's. Near the end of the exclusivity period, the manufacturer switched from a twice-daily drug to a once-daily drug. That move prevented pharmacists from being able to switch patients to a lower cost generic, allowing the company to continue to profit as a result of their exclusive use of that patent.

Secondly, the bill would define "patent thickets," which occur when an innovator seeks multiple overlapping patents or patents with identical claims near when they are about to lose their right to exclusivity. Companies take advantage of our country's robust innovation protection in order to hang onto their monopolies as long as possible. One example is the drug Humira, which is one of the most widely prescribed drugs in the world. It is commonly used to treat arthritis and other autoimmune diseases. AbbVie, the manufacturer of Humira, has 136 patents and 247 patent applications on their drug, which has been available for more than 15 years—136 patents with 247 patent applications. There has to be a reason for that.

This type of behavior makes it very difficult for biosimilar drugs to come to market. While the patent on the actual drug formula—the original one—may have expired, there are still in this case hundreds of other patents to sort through and, frequently, to litigate in terms of the validity of those additional patents. The artificial structuring of these multiple patents can delay the entry of generic or biosimilar competition for much longer than anybody ever would have intended—certainly longer than Congress intended by giving patent protection.

By defining product hopping and patent thickets as anti-competitive behavior, we would allow the Federal Trade Commission to bring antitrust suits against the bad actors who deliberately game the system, and we would give them injunctive authority—not money damage authority, but injunctive authority to make the system fairer and operate as Congress intended.

The second bill I am going to introduce has to do with Medicare part D—one of the most successful and popular pharmaceutical programs around. Part D sponsors may voluntarily report fraud data to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, but they are not required to report the number of specific instances of potential fraud, waste, and abuse they identify or the

actions they took to address these issues. My bill would implement recommendations for the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General to require plan sponsors to report that fraud and improve oversight of this important program.

I have learned a lot about prescription drugs during these hearings, a lot about the wonderful lifesaving innovation, the importance of preserving that period of exclusivity for people who invest in the research and develop these new lifesaving drugs, but I have also learned a little bit about some of the abuses, which I have talked about here today, and the need for us to continue to work together to find solutions to provide Texans and all Americans who are struggling to cover the cost of their prescriptions with some relief.

By eliminating some of these tactics used by pharmaceutical companies to delay and deter competition, we will increase the availability of generics and give patients greater freedom to choose a drug that works at a price they can afford. By creating more accountability under Medicare part D, we can prevent taxpayers from footing the bill for a broken system.

While we are still working to find a solution for the multitude of problems and challenges we face in dealing with the pharmaceutical drug industry, one thing is abundantly clear: A one-size-fits-all, government-run healthcare system is not going to work. Indeed, we need to make targeted, smart reforms that will bring down the cost of prescriptions and not the quality of the entire healthcare system. That is precisely what these two bills will do, and I hope we will be able to advance these pieces of legislation to promote more affordable medications.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, this week, families across our country are preparing to celebrate Mother's Day and recognize the hard work that women do to support their families and build a brighter future in their communities.

Here in Congress, we should be working to help moms back in Washington State and across the country. Unfortunately, instead of looking for ways to support women, President Trump has been pushing an ideological agenda that undermines their health, reproductive rights and freedoms, and economic security.

When it comes to healthcare, President Trump is working to sabotage the care moms and their families rely on. He changed Federal rules to let insurance companies sell junk coverage that does not cover maternity care, and he

is arguing in court to strike down protections for women and people with preexisting conditions in all plans insurers sell.

Instead of supporting the Title X Family Planning Program, which has a history of bipartisan support and a tremendous track record helping women get critical, low-cost family planning and preventive healthcare services, President Trump is chipping away at it and working to strip title X grants from Planned Parenthood, which serves tens of thousands of women in my home State of Washington each year and millions more nationwide, including mothers like Shannon.

Shannon first went to Planned Parenthood when she was 18 for what turned out to be endometriosis. It is a condition that causes severe menstrual pain and can affect fertility. Thanks to the treatment she received at Planned Parenthood, today Shannon is managing her chronic pain and raising an adorable little girl.

When I was in Seattle a few weeks ago, another constituent, Cindy, shared how a routine screening at Planned Parenthood saved her life by detecting cancer early on and giving her the head start she needed to beat it. Today Cindy is not just a survivor; she is a mother because she was able to get pregnant after she went into remission.

We should be supporting providers that help women like them get the care they need, not burdening them with restrictions designed to force out Planned Parenthood or gag clauses that prevent providers from even discussing a patient's right to a safe, legal abortion. Moms deserve better.

Unfortunately President Trump's attacks on women's reproductive rights go well beyond his changes to the title X program. Since day one, he has been working to jam our courts full of far-right judges to appease extreme Republicans who want to see *Roe v. Wade* struck down. When President Trump nominated Justice Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, we heard from women and men across the country, concerned about what his confirmation would mean. Countless women shared their personal stories about what life was like before *Roe v. Wade* and what the right to get a safe, legal abortion has meant to their families.

So while Republicans continue to press ahead with extreme, harmful legislation—like the bill that was just passed in Georgia—and President Trump continues to tell outright lies meant to demonize women and their healthcare providers, people are going to continue calling out those lies, calling out the attempts to turn back the clock, and standing in solidarity with women across the country.

President Trump's harmful attacks on women's healthcare are hardly the only time he has ignored how his policies would hurt women and their families. He has also cruelly and unnecessarily separated hundreds of migrant parents and their children. Yolany is a

mother who is being detained in Tacoma, WA, while her 6-year-old son has been sent all the way across the country to New York. According to media reports, they were kept apart for almost 2 months before they were reunited. Their story is just one of so many pointless tragedies President Trump's heartless family separation policy has caused.

Moms deserve better, especially when there are so many other challenges on which they need us to lead. There is the maternal mortality crisis and the appalling fact that our country has the highest maternal death rate in the developed world. We know this crisis is worse for women of color—for African-American women in particular, who face an even higher maternal death rate. Because of a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, we also know that three out of five pregnancy-related deaths in our country are preventable.

We should be working together to take action to stop so many mothers from dying in childbirth and building on the \$50 million Maternal Mortality Initiative that I fought to enact in this year's funding bill to expand evidence-based programs to prevent maternal mortality and advance maternal health equity.

There is the childcare crisis and the reality that for far too many parents, quality, affordable childcare is not available. One mother in Washington State told me how she struck out with more than 10 childcare centers before she finally found one that could care for her son, and when she did find it, it cost her more than her mortgage. We should be working to make sure all parents can go to work and know their children will be well cared for.

We should also be fighting for paid family leave so that people will have the time they need to welcome new members to their families and start building those bonds that will last a lifetime and so that no parent will have to choose between a paycheck and caring for a sick child.

At a time when there is so much we could be doing to make life better for mothers and fathers and families across the country, it is disappointing that President Trump has spent so much time looking for ways to make things worse.

While the Trump administration may not be fighting for families, moms are. Just last week, I attended a rally here in Washington, DC, and met a mom who came all the way across the country, from Washington State, to speak up for families like hers. I know what it is like to be in her shoes—or tennis shoes, I should say. I also know that when people like her speak up and fight for change, they do make a difference, which is why I am so inspired by the moms whose stories I have shared today and by the many others who shared their stories with me back in my home State of Washington.

I wish all the moms out there a happy Mother's Day. I know you are

going to keep fighting for your families, and I want you to know we are going to keep fighting for you.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, I thank Senator MURRAY for organizing all of us to come to the floor in honor of Mother's Day. I will take time to talk about the ongoing attacks on women's health in this country.

I feel a sense of urgency about the increasingly hostile, escalating, and unrelenting attacks on women's health by Donald Trump and Republicans. From continuous efforts to defund Planned Parenthood, to the taking away of title X funds, to trying to repeal the Affordable Care Act—all programs that support healthcare for millions of women in this country—I have to ask, why? What is the motivation to take away healthcare services for millions of women in this country? It is not clear why they are doing this. What is clear is the harm they are causing women.

Repealing the Affordable Care Act would mean that insurance plans would no longer be required to cover maternity care and birth control. Insurance companies would be able to discriminate against people with preexisting conditions. Astoundingly, for women, this would include pregnancy.

Donald Trump and congressional Republicans are proposing trillion-dollar cuts to Medicaid. If implemented, this could endanger tens of millions of women in this country who rely on Medicaid for coverage during pregnancies and births. Do they even care that these cuts to Medicaid are particularly cruel in the face of an infant and maternal mortality crisis in our country, particularly for Black women?

By establishing a gag rule, Donald Trump is forcing healthcare providers to choose between providing full and accurate information on all available healthcare options for women, including for abortion, and hundreds of millions of dollars in Federal title X funding. States like Hawaii are refusing to succumb to this unjustified coercion by refusing title X funds and are replacing them with hard-earned State funds so that providers in our State, for example, can give the necessary healthcare to women.

By trying to pass onerous, new abortion restrictions in States across the country, conservative forces are working hard to undermine a woman's constitutional right to have an abortion. One institution that can stand up to this assault on women's rights and women's health is our Federal judiciary. Last month, for example, a Federal judge in Washington State blocked the implementation of the Trump administration's title X gag rule. In March, a Federal judge in Kentucky prevented a new law from going into effect that would have restricted abortion after 6 weeks of pregnancy. These

two recent examples demonstrate the importance of our courts in upholding the Constitution and the law and in constraining radical rightwing assaults on women's health and rights.

To counter what independent judges are doing, Donald Trump, Leader McConnell, and Senate Republicans are packing our courts with ideologically driven conservative judges who will be on their ideological page. Over the past 2½ years, they have confirmed more than 100 new Federal judges, an overwhelming majority of whom was selected by two ultraconservative organizations—the Federalist Society and the Heritage Foundation.

Their efforts to pack the courts continue this week in an upcoming vote on a nominee for the Second Circuit in New York, Michael Park, who fought to restrict access to reproductive healthcare for women. In one recent example, Mr. Park defended Kansas's attempt to defund Planned Parenthood by terminating its Medicaid contracts. This would have ended the vital services Planned Parenthood provides to low-income patients, services such as cancer screenings and access to contraception. Fortunately, the judges who heard that case rejected Mr. Park's arguments. Yet, now, with his confirmation to the Second Circuit all but assured, Mr. Park is set to become the judge in these types of cases. It is no wonder that both of his home State Senators oppose his nomination.

In their not being satisfied with packing our courts with judges who have ideologically rightwing agendas, Donald Trump and Republican leaders are resorting to incendiary, reprehensible, and false rhetoric to inflame their base. We have seen this most recently in the debate around the so-called Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act and the vilification of women who seek abortions later in pregnancy. Infanticide is already a crime, but you would never know it if you listened to Republican politicians and their mouthpieces on FOX News and the conservative media.

In a FOX News op-ed, my colleague from Nebraska, for example, accused the Democrats of “blurring the line between abortion and outright infanticide.” During the debate on the bill, ultraconservative FOX News host Laura Ingraham compared Planned Parenthood—the Nation's largest maternal health provider that has saved thousands of lives—to Adolf Hitler. She said: “Hitler, just like Planned Parenthood, practiced and defended mass extermination.”

Immediately after the Senate defeated this unnecessary bill, Donald Trump tweeted:

Senate Democrats just voted against legislation to prevent the killing of newborn infant children. The Democrat position on abortion is now so extreme that they don't mind executing babies AFTER birth.

The President's incendiary and completely false rhetoric on this issue has become a rallying cry at his bizarre political rallies across the country. Last

month, in Green Bay, WI, for example, he said:

The baby is born, the mother meets with the doctor, they take care of the baby, they wrap the baby beautifully, and then the doctor and the mother determine whether or not they will execute the baby.

This kind of rhetoric is simply outrageous. It is not harmless electioneering. It is dangerous. It is incitement. It is also provoking a dramatic uptick in threats to abortion providers and supporters of abortion rights across the country.

This sustained rightwing attack is taking a heavy emotional toll on women who seek to have abortions later in their pregnancies and the doctors who provide this essential care.

Kate Carson, a woman from Boston who sought an abortion after Laurel, her daughter, was diagnosed with catastrophic brain malformations in 2012, wrote a powerful op-ed about her painful decision.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD Kate Carson's op-ed, dated February 19, 2019.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From USA Today, Feb. 19, 2019]

I HAD A LATER ABORTION BECAUSE I COULDN'T GIVE MY BABY GIRL BOTH LIFE AND PEACE

(By Kate Carson, Opinion Contributor)

No one loves my baby more than I do. Her death was a gift of mercy. Now, women like me will always be a scapegoat for policies limiting women's rights.

People are talking about me again, loudly, unkindly. Even the president of the United States has had his say about families like mine. I have told this story so many times, but I will tell it again as many times as it takes.

I help run a support group for families who have ended pregnancy after poor prenatal or maternal diagnoses. If you're wondering, "Who are these women who get abortions in the third trimester?" We are. I am. Parents who love our babies with our entire hearts. Desperate acts like an abortion in the 36th week of pregnancy are brought about only by the most desperate circumstances and are only available to those who can come up with a lot of money quickly.

I know. I've been there.

My daughter, Laurel, was diagnosed in May 2012 with catastrophic brain malformations (including Dandy-Walker malformation) that were overlooked until my 35th week of pregnancy. I did not know much about brain disorders at that point. I imagined developmental delay, special education classes, financial pressure, an overhaul of expectations for Laurel's life and my motherhood. Here were the doctors' real expectations for Laurel: a brief life of seizures, full-body muscle cramps, and aspirating her own bodily fluids.

When I heard the list of all the things my beloved daughter would not do—talk, walk, hold her head up, swallow—I grasped for what she would be able to do.

"Do children like mine just sleep all the time?" I asked.

The neurologist winced. Children like yours, he told me—slowly—are not often comfortable enough to sleep.

Our choice was sad—but clear.

Let me answer some questions you might be thinking: Yes, we were sure that these

problems were severe. No, there is no cure, nor any on the horizon. Yes, we were counseled in-depth on our options, including adoption. Because we wanted to spare our daughter as much suffering as possible, our choice was very sad, but crystal clear: abortion.

I imagined an abortion at eight months would be grisly. But no matter how violent my imagination, it surely could not compare with the suffering Laurel would have endured in her own broken body.

In Massachusetts, my home state, a later abortion can be obtained only if the life or health of the mother is at risk. So I set off on a 2,000-mile journey from Massachusetts to Colorado to access this abortion. I landed, not in the nightmare I had imagined, but in the safest, kindest, most dignified hands I have ever encountered as a patient anywhere. Dr. Warren Hem at his Boulder Abortion Clinic is one of the few doctors in the country performing this procedure. After a single injection and a couple of hours, my baby was laid to rest in my womb, the purest mercy that I knew how to give my Laurel.

As the usual hubbub of hate and misunderstanding around abortion swelled to a roar this month, the president unfairly addressed families like mine in his State of the Union address. He hasn't really listened to women like me or doctors like Dr. Hem. He seems to care nothing for the true stories of heartbreak, loss and extreme medical complexity behind abortion later in pregnancy. Instead, his agenda must inflate fear and horror until every last American thinks of unspeakable violence.

Mercy means something different to each family.

This is not about abortion. It is about power. This administration needs the public to be angry at women like me and misinformed about what compels women to seek later abortions, which make up less than 1.5 percent of abortions, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But I believe that Americans can hear our story and meet the painful, complicated truth about abortions later in pregnancy with love and understanding.

And most Americans have compassion for a woman's choice when it comes to her reproductive health care. In fact, nearly 70 percent of Americans do not want to see the Supreme Court completely overturn *Roe v. Wade*, according to the Pew Research Center.

Nobody loves Laurel more than I do. Her death was a gift of mercy. Mercy means different things to different loving families, and that has to be OK. To all the families who faced similar circumstances and made a different choice, I honor you. I trust your wisdom. I celebrate your child's brief and beautiful life.

We must treat each other with love, tenderness and respect. It is horrible, as a parent, to choose between life and peace for our children, especially when we want to give our children both beautiful and precious gifts.

It is devastating to lose a child. But, unlike most bereaved parents, women like me will live out the rest of our lives as scapegoats, fuel for an agenda that seeks to strip women and families of our reproductive freedoms.

When I think of my baby Laurel, I feel love and peace. Unfortunately, I cannot be with that peace because there are fresh wounds in the way, the throbbing pain of being hated and misunderstood.

Ms. HIRONO. Madam President, here is some of what Kate wrote:

I help run a support group for families who have ended pregnancy after poor prenatal or maternal diagnoses. If you're wondering,

"Who are these women who get abortions in the third trimester?" We are. I am. Parents who love our babies with our entire hearts. Desperate acts like an abortion in the 36th week of pregnancy are brought about only by the most desperate circumstances and are only available to those who can come up with a lot of money quickly.

I know. I've been there.

My daughter, Laurel, was diagnosed in May 2012 with catastrophic brain malformations . . . that were overlooked until my 35th week of pregnancy.

I did not know much about brain disorders at that point. I imagined developmental delay, special education classes, financial pressure, an overhaul of expectations for Laurel's life and my motherhood. Here were the doctors' real expectations for Laurel: a brief life of seizures, full-body muscle cramps, and aspirating her own bodily fluids.

It is devastating to lose a child. But, unlike most bereaved parents, women like me will live out the rest of our lives as scapegoats, fuel for an agenda that seeks to strip women and families of our reproductive freedoms.

Madam President, it is outrageous and offensive that Donald Trump and his allies in Congress would seek to turn women like Kate into scapegoats for their political agendas.

I have been an advocate of abortion rights for decades, and I fear that one day soon, women in this country will wake up and realize they no longer have control over their own bodies. What could be more intrusive than the government's telling women what they can do with their own bodies?

In the face of these ongoing attacks on women's health and women's rights, we will continue to raise our voices. We will continue to fight back.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise to speak about the pending nominations. I will have comments on both.

First, I ask unanimous consent that both sets of remarks appear in separate parts of the RECORD that are relevant to those nominations.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I come to the floor this afternoon to join my colleagues in raising concerns about the unrelenting attacks that this administration has waged on the health of women in New Hampshire and across the country.

With Mother's Day just around the corner, it is important to make clear that we cannot stand idly by while the administration undermines access to maternity care, to family planning, and to reproductive care for women.

Through misguided executive orders, regulations, and other actions, this administration is making it more difficult for women to access the care and services they need in communities across the country and abroad.

Now, new mothers deal with significant medical expenses. That is why we

worked very hard, when we were writing the Affordable Care Act, to require insurance coverage for maternity care, to help new mothers cover the cost of obstetric services and of hospital charges for childbirth and other expenses.

The Affordable Care Act and the access to maternity care coverage it provides have made a real difference for so many people in New Hampshire and across the country.

One of those women is Samantha Fox from Bow, NH. Samantha is now a State legislator in New Hampshire, but prior to the Affordable Care Act, Samantha was denied coverage for health insurance because of a reproductive system disorder, and the insurance that she was able to get didn't provide prenatal and maternity care coverage.

Well, thanks to the ACA, she was guaranteed coverage of these vital maternity care services that were so important when she gave birth to her son Leo in 2017.

We can't go back to those days before the Affordable Care Act, when only 12 percent of health plans on the individual market covered maternity care or when women could be charged higher premiums than men for the very same coverage.

But that is exactly what the Trump administration is trying to do by expanding the availability of junk plans that are not required to cover maternity care, and that is what this administration is trying to do by urging the courts to strike down the Affordable Care Act in its entirety.

Now, in addition, at a time when 43 percent of childbirths in this country are covered and paid for by the Medicaid Program, the Trump administration continues to propose Medicaid block grants and funding caps that would fail to adequately support States for the cost of coverage for pregnant women and new mothers.

Senator CASEY was very eloquent in talking about what will happen if the effort to reduce Medicaid is successful.

Sadly, the barriers to women's healthcare that this administration has created go beyond just insurance coverage. They are also imposing significant impediments to access to family planning services.

The administration's title X gag rule would violate the provider-patient relationship by prohibiting providers who receive Federal family planning grants from informing their patients about reproductive health options, including safe and legal abortions.

In 2017, more than 16,000 Granite Staters obtained care from family planning providers that receive support through Federal title X family planning grants. This includes more than 1,200 cervical cancer screenings and nearly 1,500 breast exams that were provided by New Hampshire's Planned Parenthood facilities that, if this gag rule is allowed to stand, would then be eliminated, and women would have to get those screenings somewhere else,

and in many cases, the women would not be able to afford the cost of those screenings. The title X gag rule puts access to these and so many other vital services at risk.

The administration's barriers to family planning services extend around the world as a result of a similar global gag rule on international family planning grants.

Based on the unfortunate experience with the global gag rule, we already know that when you exclude entities like Planned Parenthood and other providers from family planning grants, you will impede access to care for vulnerable women in impoverished countries around the world, and we are now beginning to get the data from so many NGOs that provide those services.

It is ironic because people in this administration who say they support the gag rule say they do it because they are trying to reduce the number of abortions. Yet what we know is that putting on this global gag rule increases the number of unwarranted pregnancies, increases the number of unsafe abortions, and increases the number of maternal deaths in childbirth. I don't understand why the data is not convincing to those people who share the view that we should try to reduce the number of unwarranted pregnancies and reduce the number of abortions. That is why, each year, I have come together with Senators COLLINS and MURKOWSKI to lead a bipartisan charge to repeal the global gag rule and to bolster resources for international family planning. Hopefully, we will be able to pass that again this year.

In light of all of these dangerous efforts to erode protections for women's health, we need to stand together here in Congress. We need to join forces with women around the country and around the world. We need to say enough is enough. Women should be able to access health insurance for reproductive services and for family planning services, just as men can access health insurance for all of the services they need.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from Connecticut.

IRAQ

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, over the Easter recess, Senator ROMNEY and I had the privilege to visit our troops and our diplomats in Iraq. They are serving us well, and they are putting their lives on the line as we partner with the Iraqis to make sure that ISIS does not reconstitute itself in Iraq or in Syria. We have taken their territory away from them, but there are still over 20,000 or so ISIS fighters and loyalists in and around the region.

Once again, our trip proved to both of us that our soldiers and our diplomats are the best in the world. We are so lucky to have them be so willing to stand on guard for us all over the

world. It may be the most important assignment today in Iraq as we continue to battle the scattered remnants of ISIS.

I don't want a President who takes the unquestioning advice of his military leaders. I want a President who is willing to push back. But nobody knows how to defeat ISIS better than the U.S. military. They effectively have done it twice. They beat al-Qaida in Iraq, and then they came back again with many partners to take territory away from ISIS. Nobody takes more seriously the threat of ISIS's reemergence or the threat of an expansionist Iran than the U.S. military. But I am here today to talk about our President's refusal, over and over again, to listen to the advice that he is being given by his generals and by his advisers at the Department of Defense. Instead, he is listening to the Iraq hawks inside the White House who think about this problem through the air-conditioned safety of their West Wing offices with little regard to how things actually work in the real world on the ground of the Middle East.

I want to talk about our two main objectives today in Iraq and in Iran, and I want to frame this in the context of today's disastrous news that the Iranians are restarting elements of their nuclear weapons program.

First, let's talk about a bipartisan commitment that we share, and that is the commitment to stop Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. In and of itself, it would be a world disaster. It would present an immediate existential threat to our partners in Israel, and it would result in an arms race throughout the region that would be exacerbated by the fact that in the last 2 years, the Trump administration has made the decision to engage in a new nuclear partnership with the Saudis, which puts the Saudis on a quicker path to obtaining a nuclear weapon in case that arms race sets off.

What the Trump administration has done is to goad Iran into restarting their nuclear weapons program. They announced last night that they are pulling out of their side of the Iran nuclear agreement and that they are going to start to, once again, take steps that could lead them to a quick breakout to a nuclear weapon.

Those who opposed the agreement that President Obama signed did so, in part, because they said that it could allow Iran to restart its nuclear weapons program in 10 to 13 years and that 10 to 13 years wasn't enough security to sign on to that agreement. Well, President Trump has now managed to press the Iranians into restarting their nuclear weapons program in 4 years. We didn't get 10 years; we didn't get 13 years; we got 4 years, and Iran is back on a potential path to a nuclear weapon.

The President will say that he is imposing crippling new sanctions on Iran, such that they will come back to the negotiating table. But let's be honest.

There is not a plausible path for that to happen in the next year and a half of the President's term. It took President Obama two terms to engage in multilateral sanctions to get the Iranians to the negotiating table. There are no credible analysts of Iranian behavior or of politics in the Middle East that will tell you that the Iranians are going to come back to the negotiating table in the next 12 months, in part, because the balance of powers has totally flipped.

Under the Obama administration, it was the United States, Europe, China, and Russia on one side and the Iranians on the other side. President Trump has managed to flip that alignment, such that it is now the Iranians, the Europeans, the Chinese, and the Russians on one side and the United States isolated on the other. If you don't believe me, just take a look at the statements that many of those parties sent out in response to Iran's decision last night, effectively aligning themselves with the Iranians' decision to restart their nuclear program instead of aligning themselves, as they had for years, with the U.S. position of strict nonproliferation.

It is a disaster for the United States that Iran has restarted its nuclear weapons program. It is a massive failure of President Trump's strategy, but it is only one element of a meandering Iranian strategy that is accruing to the national security detriment of the United States.

Let's talk about our second primary objective in this region. I referenced it at the outset. It is to prevent the reemergence and reconstitution of ISIS inside Iraq and Syria. We have bad news to report there as well.

The Trump administration took another step that had been counseled against by his generals and by his military leaders, and that is the designation of the IRGC—an element of the Iranian military—as a terrorist group. Now, nobody could come to this floor and defend the actions of Iran or the IRGC. They have absolutely supported terrorism in the region for years. They supported Shia militias inside Iraq that were shooting at and killing American troops. Yet, notwithstanding that activity, our military leaders and our diplomats inside Iraq cautioned the administration against making this designation because weighing the costs of it against the benefits to our military leaders was a clear case.

The costs are this: By telling these militias inside Iran that they have to make a choice today between the United States and this newly designated terrorist group, the Iranian militias make the choice easily. They align themselves with Iran, their neighbor, not the United States. The effect of our decision is to push more of these militia groups closer to the Iranians.

Second, we no longer can talk diplomatically to the groups that have associations with the IRGC, and that is a

lot of these militia groups. That means that the United States effectively takes itself out of the game diplomatically. We no longer have the ability to engage in political reconciliation in the country like we used to.

All of this presses the case of ISIS, as they are able to make the case that Baghdad is more and more leaning toward Shia interests and Iranian interests. As the United States isn't there in order to press the reconciliation case, ISIS has an opportunity to reemerge. All of this also accrues to the benefit of those interested in Iraq who want the U.S. military out.

Just months ago there was an effort to push a bill through Parliament to expel the United States and our continued hard line on Iran. As much as it may make sense to the air-conditioned offices of the White House to allow those interests in Iraq to, potentially, successfully litigate the case to push the U.S. military out of that country, it would, once again, open the gates to ISIS.

As far as I can tell, the administration's policy is to set in motion a series of escalatory actions with respect to Iran that has no end game with no logical conclusion. There isn't a diplomatic process at the end of this rainbow. The President has a year and a half left in his term. There isn't enough time, and there is no willingness in Iran and no partners on our side, as I have mentioned.

So what is the other alternative—military action? An invasion of Iran would be an unmitigated national security disaster. It would make the mistake of invading Iraq look positively benign, in retrospect. There is no appetite in America for such an endeavor, and there is no way the votes exist in Congress to authorize such an action.

The risk, of course, is that we fall into war by accident or through a series of events that appear as an accident. When you commit yourself to such an unplanned and unscripted series of military and diplomatic escalations, as the Trump administration has, and you have no working channel of communication to settle misunderstandings, then accidents can easily happen. Shots can be fired; lives can be lost, and then our options suddenly narrow. That is the real risk of the path we are on today. What scares the heck out of me is that it is a path that is seemingly being made up day by day, and it is a path that is opposed by our military and that is laid out without any meaningful input from our diplomats who are on the ground in the region. That is a potential recipe for disaster.

It shouldn't matter whether you are a Democrat or a Republican, a liberal or a conservative because messing around in the Middle East, in countries like Iran and Iraq, with no strategy and no clear set of goals should send chills down every Senator's spine.

I yield the floor.

NOMINATION OF JANET DHILLON

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I want to say a few words about the nomination of Janet Dhillon to be Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which we know by the shorthand EEOC. I will vote against her nomination. I have voted against it in the past in committee.

But let me tell you about the EEOC. We need a little reminder of this once in a while. It is a bipartisan Commission that for decades has worked to protect American workers from discrimination in the workplace—all kinds of discrimination.

Many lawyers know that if you bring an action in a State court or in a Federal court, the first step is that you have to go through all of your administrative remedies. So if you bring a Federal lawsuit or a civil action based upon discrimination, the first thing you have to do is to go to the EEOC. Before you can get to a Federal district court, you have to go through the EEOC. So it becomes the first court, in essence. It is not technically a court, but it becomes the first place you go to have your "discrimination in the workplace" claim considered.

During that time, since the founding or the beginnings of the EEOC, people in both parties in the Senate have worked together to move forward nominees from both parties in tandem so the Commission could continue its essential work.

Today this bipartisan process is being cast aside by the majority in the Senate because no Democratic nominee is being considered along with Janet Dhillon, who has been proposed by the administration. My colleagues in the majority have decided to abandon this bipartisan cooperation.

We know that the EEOC plays a critical role in protecting workers from all forms—all forms—of workplace discrimination and in ensuring that all workers have equal access to employment opportunities.

Another point that is important is that the EEOC is currently in the middle of collecting data on pay gaps faced by women in the workplace, and the EEOC's leadership is badly needed so that we can work to eliminate workplace sexual harassment—still a big problem where we have a long way to go.

So instead of working with Democrats to make their sure that all—all—EEOC positions are filled so the Commission can undertake this work, the majority is instead working only to advance the Republican nominees put forward by the White House.

This is not how the Senate should work. It certainly is not how the Senate should work as it relates to the EEOC, and the most significant losers here are American workers. They will pay the price because of the EEOC not having more nominations that are bipartisan.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 6 minutes on the Dhillon nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to oppose the nomination of Janet Dhillon to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

I have a number of concerns about her record, which I plan to lay out here today, but before I do, I want to talk about the process by which this nomination has come to the Senate floor.

It has long been common practice in the Senate to confirm nominees to independent agencies as pairs—one Republican and one Democrat.

We do this so agencies like the EEOC are balanced and are able to fully function no matter which party is in the White House. In the case of the EEOC, it ensures workers are being protected from discrimination in the workplace.

Yet, at every opportunity, Republicans have broken norms and abandoned longstanding practices to jam through their nominees. First it was the National Labor Relations Board, when my colleagues across the aisle jammed through two Republican nominees without any Democrats and then refused to give a highly qualified nominee another term on the Board—all because that highly qualified nominee was fighting on the side of workers, not corporations. Then one lone Republican was allowed to object to the reconfirmation of a well-respected Commissioner to another term on the EEOC, even if that meant the EEOC would no longer have a quorum and be able to perform some of its most critical duties.

I came down to the floor to urge our colleagues to end the partisan obstruction and pass a slate of nominees to the EEOC, but Republican leaders allowed one Republican Member's opposition to a noncontroversial nominee to hold more weight than the entire Senate minority.

Now, here we are today, and Republicans want to jam through another nominee without their Democratic pair, and by doing this, my colleagues across the aisle have now abandoned longstanding norms of the Senate and are once again sending a message to the most vulnerable workers they believe the corporations that discriminate against them deserve more of a say.

This is unacceptable and goes against the core of the EEOC. It is illegal to discriminate against someone in the workplace because of their race, religion, sex, disability, or because they are LGBTQ. It is the EEOC's responsibility to enforce those laws and to give every person the opportunity to earn a living without fear of discrimination or harassment.

The EEOC protects LGBTQ rights in the workplace and is the primary agency addressing the gender pay gap. The EEOC is responsible for addressing harassment in the workplace, an issue our

country has been grappling with but still has a long way to go. Over the past 2 years, as so many brave women and men have spoken out and shared their stories, we have seen a shift in this country toward acknowledging, finally, the epidemic of harassment and assault in workplaces, and finally we are beginning to address it on a large scale. In Hollywood, the media, even in the Halls of Congress—those who have used their position of power to prey on the less powerful are finally being held accountable.

Workers in industries outside the spotlight, in hospitality or farm fields, and in offices around the country are waiting for the same kind of reckoning. For many of these workers, the EEOC is one of the few places they can turn. It is a resource for workers who want to file complaints and hold employers and businesses accountable for discrimination and harassment. This issue should matter to everyone—Democrats and Republicans—and this critical civil rights agency should be able to stay out of the political fray too. We have to ensure that the EEOC is balanced and remains committed to its core mission.

Unfortunately, Janet Dhillon's record proves she is not going to stand up for workers. Ms. Dhillon has spent her career working on the side of corporations, making it easier for them to violate workers' rights without consequence. She has fought against positions the EEOC has taken that help ensure workers have the protections they need.

In her confirmation hearing, she refused to commit to maintaining the EEOC's current and critical position that LGBTQ workers are protected under the Civil Rights Act, which is something, by the way, that should not be up for debate.

So what we are seeing today is another power grab by Republican leaders, another Republican step toward partisanship and away from balance, and if Ms. Dhillon is confirmed, another step backward under Republican leadership for workers who simply want to be treated fairly on the job, especially those workers who historically have not had the rights or resources to come forward.

I urge the Senate leadership to postpone this vote and work with the White House to get our Democratic nominee ready for confirmation—she is waiting—so there is no other break in yet another Senate tradition. It is bad for workers. It is bad for our country.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON DHILLON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, will the Senate advise and consent to the Dhillon nomination?

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 104 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Ernst	Paul
Barrasso	Fischer	Perdue
Blackburn	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Burr	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Cassidy	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Collins	Isakson	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson	Sullivan
Cotton	Kennedy	Thune
Cramer	Lankford	Tillis
Crapo	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	McSally	Young
Enzi	Moran	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Heinrich	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Jones	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Harris	Reed	
Hassan	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—7

Bennet	Murkowski	Sinema
Booker	Rubio	
Klobuchar	Scott (FL)	

The nomination was confirmed.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Michael H. Park, of New York, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, Tom Cotton, John Boozman, Mitt Romney, Roy Blunt, Joni Ernst, Mike Braun, Thom Tillis,

John Hoeven, Pat Roberts, Johnny Isakson, Mike Rounds, James E. Risch, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Roger F. Wicker, John Barrasso.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that the nomination of Michael H. Park, of New York, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted "yea" and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 105 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blackburn	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Braun	Hawley	Roberts
Burr	Hoeven	Romney
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Cassidy	Inhofe	Sasse
Collins	Isakson	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cramer	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Toomey
Daines	McSally	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Young

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Heinrich	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Jones	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Coons	Markey	Udall
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warren
Feinstein	Murray	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Harris	Reed	
Hassan	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—6

Bennet	Klobuchar	Scott (FL)
Booker	Rubio	Sinema

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 43.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Michael H. Park, of New York, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Second Circuit.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, this week, we know that the Senate is considering the nomination of Michael Park, who has been nominated by the President to serve on the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. I have a number of concerns with Mr. Park's nomination and his record. I will highlight just one that I think is a major concern for many Americans.

In 2011, Mr. Park submitted an amicus brief to the U.S. Supreme Court, arguing that the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion was unconstitutional. That is the argument he made. He claimed that the Medicaid expansion provision coerced States into accepting a "greatly enlarged Medicaid program." I will come back to that later because those words are important. The rationale for this, he asserted, was that these States could not realistically opt out. Obviously, I disagree with his argument, and I disagree with his rationale. Yet I want to talk about the program and, more importantly, the people who will be affected by his point of view on this policy if he is to be successful in his arguments.

If he is to be confirmed, I have a real concern about how he will make decisions as a judge as they relate to healthcare, Medicaid expansion, and related topics.

So I am not going to go through the legal arguments, but I do want to talk about Medicaid expansion, the importance of it, and the people it helps. Everyone here knows that Medicaid itself has been a program that we have enjoyed the benefits of for more than 50 years. Right now, about 75 million people are covered by Medicaid. Approximately 17 million of those individuals are eligible because of Medicaid expansion. So millions of people got healthcare because of the Medicaid expansion part of the Affordable Care Act.

Medicaid itself covers 38 percent of the 1.9 million people younger than age 65 who are battling an opioid addiction. So 38 percent of the 1.9 million people are helped who are in the grip of that addiction. That affects every State, every community, and, increasingly, virtually every family, or at least we all seem to know someone who has been adversely impacted by an opioid addiction or a substance use disorder issue.

So 38 percent is almost 4 in 10. So 4 in 10 people who need that help are benefiting from Medicaid itself because of Medicaid expansion.

A lot of politicians in Washington tried to convince people, both here and around the country, that Medicaid was about some other person over there, some person that you didn't know, some person that you may not have to be too concerned about, or so the argument went—that Medicaid was not about you or your family. It was about

some other person. The implicit message was this: Don't worry about them. They probably don't need it, and you can vote for repeal and everything will be OK for the country.

Well, we know now better than ever, probably, in the last 2 years since that debate and the ongoing debate we had starting in 2017 and a debate, frankly, that has been playing out over many years, that Medicaid is not a program for someone else. It is an "us" program. Medicaid is about us, about who we are as a country. It tells us a lot about our values—whom we value, for whom we will fight, and whom we stand up for.

Medicaid provides coverage—basically, if you wanted to simplify it—for three groups of Americans: seniors, kids, and people with disabilities.

In my home State of Pennsylvania, Medicaid could be simplified this way. It is an oversimplification, but it is a good way to describe it in numerical terms. Medicaid is a 40, 50, 60 program—40, 50, 60, pretty easy to remember.

Forty percent of all the births in Pennsylvania—the national number is actually higher—and roughly 40 percent of all the kids in our State have Medicaid. The 50 is when you look at this through the lens of individuals with disabilities—certainly, for children with disabilities. It is actually 54 percent of children with disabilities in Pennsylvania who get Medicaid. It is a big number, and those families don't want to hear talk of repeal or talk of eliminating Medicaid expansion or talk of in any way undermining Medicaid itself.

How about 60? Where does the 60 come in the 40, 50, 60 equation? The 60 are people in nursing homes. So there are a lot of families out there who may not have realized before but certainly after 2017 and 2018 that their loved one—their mom or their dad or their grandparent or relative, or their grandmother or grandfather—was getting into a nursing home in many cases solely—solely—because of the Medicaid Program. They couldn't get there any other way. They couldn't afford it unless you could shell out tens and tens of thousands of dollars a year for long-term care.

So Medicaid affects that many people just in Pennsylvania—literally millions in our State. That is just one State. The numbers are very similar across the country.

The exact numbers for Medicaid expansion in Pennsylvania exceed 700,000. So after the Affordable Care Act was passed and then implemented after 2010, over the course of several years we gained coverage in Pennsylvania of over 1.1 million people—a big number.

Unfortunately, because of the administration's sabotage over the last 2 years, that number has gone down. It is still above 1.1 million, but it is going down.

The Medicaid expansion part of that, of course, was over 700,000 people.

Now comes the administration's budget—this current budget proposal by the administration, which I predict will be rejected by the Congress. But we have to make sure it gets rejected because one of the proposals in that budget is to cut Medicaid by a trillion and a half—\$1.5 trillion—over 10 years.

The other reality here is that the official Republican position on the Affordable Care Act and related issues is that they, the Republican Members of Congress, want to eliminate Medicaid expansion over time—not just to cut it, not to change it, but to eliminate it. They want to eliminate Medicaid expansion, and, of course, based upon the \$1.5 trillion proposed cut, along with other proposals, one after another, they want to cut Medicaid itself.

So when Mr. Park uses words like his concern about the Medicaid expansion being greatly enlarged Medicaid programs, or the program itself, overall, I worry what he might do as a judge, not just on Medicaid expansion, but what he might do and decisions he might make based upon Medicaid itself.

So my original concerns about his arguments about the Affordable Care Act are now greatly and significantly increased because of what he has said about Medicaid itself, indirectly saying that he is not sure whether Medicaid itself would be worthy of the kind of support that it is going to require over time.

So I have real concerns on Medicaid. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, back in 1876, Ann Reeves Jarvis was teaching her Sunday school class about notable mothers in the Bible. She ended that class with this prayer:

I hope and pray that someone, sometime, will found a memorial mother's day commemorating her for the matchless service she renders to humanity in every field of life. She is entitled to it.

That was the prayer of Ann Reeves Jarvis. Her 12-year-old daughter Anna, who was then a student in the class, took that prayer to heart and went on to help establish Mother's Day in the United States in 1914.

As we approach Mother's Day this upcoming Sunday, I am gathered with many of my Senate colleagues to urge our Republican friends here in the Senate to reject many of the policies coming down from the Trump administration that put women's health and well-being at risk. Americans need access to family planning services. An investment in family planning is money well spent because it helps families cope with reproductive health planning and can help prevent health crises. This is a win-win for those who receive these services and for all Americans who, in the long run, must pay for health services that are the inevitable result of neglect and failure to provide resources for family planning.

While the Trump administration would have you believe that their ef-

forts are solely focused on eliminating access to abortion, the reality is their actions are harmful to a broad array of family planning services. For example, just in 2017, the administration tried to eliminate the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program grants more than a year early. I want to point out that the city of Baltimore had one of those grants, and with the help of programming from the Teen Pregnancy and Prevention Program, Baltimore saw a 61-percent drop in teen pregnancy between the years 2000 and 2016. The good news is that the city of Baltimore and other grantees prevailed in Federal court, so that money was restored.

We now see repeated steps by the Trump administration through its recent title X Federal rulemaking that represent another attempt to restrict access to quality, affordable reproductive healthcare and prevent women from receiving the information they need to make informed decisions for themselves about their healthcare. It would jeopardize the entire title X health network.

Specifically, the rule would block the availability of Federal funds to family planning providers, even if those family planning providers separately offer access to abortion services. In other words, despite the fact that Federal law is already crystal clear about no public funds being used to pay for abortion, the administration policy would ignore that reality.

Under the status quo, title X-funded clinics that provide abortion must keep those services financially separate from their title X activities. So this rule would interfere with the ability of women throughout America to get that unbiased family planning service and counseling. The rule would specifically prohibit any referral for abortion services and end the longstanding guarantee that pregnant title X patients receive comprehensive, unbiased counseling.

A primary goal of this regulation—and there has been no secret about this—is to prevent Federal funds from going to comprehensive family planning providers, like Planned Parenthood, with little or no regard for the impact this has on women throughout the country—and men and families. In fact, Planned Parenthood provides health services to 4 in 10 women in America. For many women and men, Planned Parenthood is the only source of care in their community.

I want to recount a couple of stories I have received from my Maryland constituents. One is from Caitlyn. She lives in Severna Park. She shared with me the impact that Planned Parenthood had in her life. She says that while growing up, she did not have a basic education when it came to reproductive health services and options. She writes:

I knew I wasn't getting the whole story and I decided [to] do my own research. Planned Parenthood had the answers to my questions with no agenda, just facts.

She went on to share a different firsthand experience she had with Planned Parenthood as a patient.

I needed services that were quick, affordable, and compassionate, and that's exactly what I received. When it came time to pay my bill, I was surprised to find that they just asked for a small donation. This donation-for-services is possible through Title X. Because of Title X, patients like me and more than 30,000 other Marylanders can access care, no matter what, regardless of our ability to pay.

That was Caitlyn.

I also heard from Tamara from Takoma Park, MD. She moved back to Maryland to care for her aging mother and accepted her dream job. Her dream job was directing a training and education fund for healthcare workers. She hesitated to accept her dream job because the employer-provided insurance plan was grandfathered into pre-Affordable Care Act regulations, meaning that her preferred form of birth control wasn't covered. Her prescription would cost her \$125 a month, something she could not afford. Through her local Planned Parenthood, she was able to get the prescription for \$20 a month. She wrote to me saying:

Without my local Title X-funded community clinic, I—a graduate of Wellesley College, a Master's Degree holder, an engaged community member, a daughter, a passionate person on a meaningful career path—would be unable to afford my prescription, leaving me in the uncomfortable and, quite frankly, unfair position of having to choose between my health or quality of life.

If you look at these stories, you will find that the proposed regulations coming down from the Trump administration prioritize ideology over patient health and safety and fiction over healthcare facts. So that is something about title X.

I want to say a word about the Affordable Care Act, as well, and the important protections it provides for people throughout our country, but I want to focus for a minute on the protections it provides to women.

It became the law of the land 9 years ago. I don't think any of us expected we would still be fighting as hard as we are to try to protect those essential healthcare protections. Despite the failure in this body and this Senate just last year to overturn the Affordable Care Act, we still see a constant effort from the administration, both through nonstop, harmful, regulatory efforts and a wholesale effort through the Federal courts. So I think it is important to remind all of us about what the consequences of stripping away all those protections would be. With respect to women's healthcare, it would do away with the provision that requires coverage of maternity care as an essential health benefit. It would reverse the provisions that ended gender discrimination, which previously allowed insurance companies to charge women higher premiums than men for their healthcare. It also would eliminate the requirement to provide coverage for preventive health services

like mammograms, screenings for cervical cancer, prenatal care, and regular well-baby and well-child visits with no cost-sharing.

So it is important, as we look at the ongoing efforts to sabotage the Affordable Care Act in pieces or get rid of it wholesale, that the consequences of getting rid of that for women's health would be devastating.

I heard from a constituent at that time; her name was Pamela. She had aged off her parents' insurance in college and became uninsured and, therefore, put off her medical care until she ended up in the emergency room, had to declare bankruptcy to get out from under her medical bills. She wrote me during that debate over the Affordable Care Act, as follows:

Today my asthma medicine is covered with a nominal copay. I can see my doctor before a case of bronchitis becomes something worse, and I do not need to go to the ER for treatment. Now I have a twenty year old in college who has pre-existing conditions, unlike me she is still covered under our health insurance and her prescriptions are affordable. What happens to me, my daughter, and my husband who all have pre-existing conditions if our insurance is allowed to go back to the old days of charging more for our coverage? What happens to my daughter if she can no longer be on our policy?

Like many of us, I have other stories I have received from Marylanders who are either worried about losing their access to healthcare through title X or worried about losing coverage under the Affordable Care Act. I hope, as we reflect on all of the challenges we are facing and as we honor mothers on Mother's Day, we don't support actions that would actually degrade their access to important quality healthcare.

I will close by urging my colleagues to reflect on the words of Ann Reeves Jarvis, who I mentioned earlier was the one who had uttered that prayer that led to the establishment of Mother's Day. What she also said was that we need to honor the "matchless service" that mothers and other women in this country "render to humanity in every field of life."

I believe it is our obligation to make sure we provide access to quality healthcare and choices for all of our constituents and for every American. As we reflect on Mother's Day, be very aware of the impact our actions will have on women throughout the United States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the Dhillon nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, this week is Small Business Week.

For over a half a century now, the country has officially recognized Small Business Week, but in our country, small businesses have always accounted for and still account for most of the jobs created—certainly, for most of the new jobs created. In Missouri, that is absolutely the case. We ought to be doing all we can to create an environment in which people can get those new jobs and often get their first jobs, and I think we are doing that.

There is nothing better for small business than a strong overall economy. Almost daily now, we see some new number that sets a new record for the last 40 years or maybe for the last 50 years. In the case of the unemployment number, just this week, for the 13th month in a row, we have had more jobs available than people who have been looking for work, and that had never happened a single time—not one single time—until 13 months ago. The best thing, obviously, for small business is to be part of a growing economy, a vibrant economy. We are seeing that, and there are reasons for that.

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 is one of those. Almost every small business now pays less in taxes on its business than it did before. Businesses are allowed to fully deduct the cost of new equipment so they can reinvest and reinvent and grow their businesses. That means more jobs.

The tax cuts also allow people to keep more of their money, and that means they have more of their money to spend. In my State of Missouri, we found that in the first 12 months of the tax cut—so these numbers are now about 6 months old, and I think, if anything, they have gotten better—the sales tax and use tax were up 2.5 percent.

We know the last quarter of the overall gross domestic product was up 3.2 percent, but 2.5 percent of real growth in just tax income is one of the ways one measures whether people are spending their money or not, and they are.

People in this economy feel more confident about their jobs, and that makes a big difference. In the previous 8 or 10 years, the fear that people had of losing their jobs has really gone. People now go to work believing there is a better chance they will get promotions than they will lose their jobs, and that makes a real difference. So we have done things that are helpful in cutting taxes.

We have also done things that are helpful in reducing regulation. The President has been particularly helpful in leading the recovery after removing regulatory redtape. Actually, small businesses are much more affected by regulatory redtape than are big businesses. Big businesses can hire somebody to go through the regulations and stay totally focused on that, and small businesses can't. If you are afraid you are going to violate some Federal regulation, you are less likely to go ahead and make the kind of investment you

would like to make than you otherwise would be. We have also created more access to credit by cutting down some of the overregulation of community banks.

There is more we ought to be doing. One thing we could have that a lot of small businesses could really benefit from is the New Markets Tax Credit Program. This is a program that was first authorized in 2000. It encourages investment in high-poverty areas or in low-income areas. Again, in Missouri, 42,000 new jobs have been created as a result of the New Markets Tax Credit Program. The other day, I went to the first new supermarket since 1968 in North St. Louis. This new supermarket opened because it was able to use the New Markets Tax Credit Program. It is a program we clearly need to extend. Once again, I and Senator CARDIN, from Maryland, introduced that legislation, and we hope that can happen.

On the health front, there is nothing better for small business than the idea of association health plans. It has been challenged in court, but I will tell you what. In Missouri, we have had experience with this for a long time. It does work. It just, frankly, makes sense. If you are a small restaurant owner, you are not going to have as good a program for your employees as if you could get that program through the Missouri Restaurant Association, through the National Restaurant Association, or through some other association that would allow you to be the kind of group from which 180 million Americans already get their insurance. We need to continue to work on this as we honor small business with things like we have done in the last couple of days.

The Ex-Im Bank is often not thought of as a thing that small business uses, but there are more small business Ex-Im Bank loans that are processed than there are of big business loans. Even when there are big business loans, those big businesses almost always have small business providers for what they do. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission can't fully work in a way that people can count on if it doesn't have the people there to make it work. We did that today.

So my colleagues and I are here today to talk about small business. It is the engine that drives America. This is the week in which we honor it, but, frankly, our economy is dependent on it every single week, and I am glad to be here to talk about it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, our Nation's economy is booming. Last Friday's jobs report far exceeded anyone's expectations. It showed that we added 263,000 jobs last month and that unemployment was sitting at the lowest since 1969. At the backbone of it all are our small businesses.

Just look at my home State of Iowa, where 99 percent of our businesses are small businesses. With our State's

economy continuing to grow and our unemployment amongst the lowest in the Nation, it is clear that our small businesses' success is Iowa's success. These job creators in our State are leading the way by finding innovative solutions and creating new opportunities for our workforce. Too often, small businesses struggle to comply with some of the most costly and burdensome regulations that come out of Washington, DC.

As a way to rein in these regulations and to foster a more thoughtful rule-making process, this week, I reintroduced my PROVE IT Act. This bipartisan legislation gives the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy an opportunity to ask Agencies to prove their regulatory analyses when proposing a rule that may be economically harmful to small businesses. It gives Iowa's small businesses a voice in the rulemaking process.

One increasingly important component of our country's labor market is women-owned small businesses. Iowa ranks in the top 10 for growth in employment and revenues in women-owned businesses. However, these businesses still face many challenges. That is why I recently introduced the Expanding Contracting Opportunities for Small Businesses Act, which addresses the discrepancy in sole-source manufacturing contracts that puts women-owned small businesses at a disadvantage. This bipartisan bill is a sensible and simple fix to help ensure all of Iowa's small business owners get a fair shot at competing and succeeding.

Commonsense deregulation, coupled with tax reform, has helped to fuel economic growth and has contributed to high levels of consumer and business confidence. Yet, folks, there is still a lot of work to be done. While many of Iowa's small businesses would absolutely love to provide their employees with the option of having paid parental leave, it is just far too costly. That is one reason I am working with Senator MIKE LEE on a proposal that would allow new moms and dads who work at one of these small businesses the opportunity to receive paid parental leave.

As a member of the Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, I am excited to celebrate National Small Business Week and to continue fighting for pro-growth policies and a regulatory system that encourages innovation and job growth—one in which Iowa's small businesses are heard loud and clear. As I have said before, when Iowa's small businesses are successful, Iowa also succeeds.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join many of my colleagues today to celebrate National Small Business Week.

Nearly every day, we do business with these local retailers or use products they had a hand in creating some-

where along the supply chain. Still, it can be easy to focus on the larger companies that dominate America's economic landscape, but this week is a time to shift our attention to the entrepreneurs and innovators who reach for their pieces of the American dream and work tirelessly to achieve them. This is no small feat, but it happens over and over again each day as it has throughout our Nation's history.

This week, we have the opportunity to recognize and commend those who take this leap of faith while generating positive economic activity and benefits that help to strengthen and sustain the system that has created more wealth for more people than any other in human history. This system is capitalism. It underpins our society and is marked by the freedom and ability to make our own economic decisions. Those decisions have often led Americans to start businesses and become their own bosses. As a result, America's small businesses are now, without question, the backbone of our country.

As the Small Business Administration has reported, more than half of Americans either own or work for a small business, and they create about two out of every three new jobs in the United States each year. It is clear that small businesses drive the U.S. economy.

I was recently in North Central Arkansas, where I met with several small business owners and their employees. This time last year, I toured small businesses in South and Southwest Arkansas to highlight and learn more about the impact they have on our State. Representatives from the Small Business Administration were on hand for some of these visits to underscore the Agency's willingness and desire to help promote and assist small businesses, owners, and entrepreneurs with establishing or expanding their companies.

At each stop, the conversations provided me with invaluable insight as to the challenges and opportunities businesses face. Inevitably, the discussions also turned to how the economic climate has changed for the better in recent years. Whether they have been changes in the Tax Code that have helped to make small businesses even more competitive, including the qualified business deduction, altering the estate tax, or increasing bonus depreciation, as well as having provided regulatory relief and certainty, we have witnessed how these pro-growth policies have not only helped to drastically uplift and improve America's economy but how they have also given business owners and entrepreneurs the confidence they have been lacking for so many years about whether to invest or expand their opportunities.

According to the Small Business Administration, Arkansas is home to over 247,000 small businesses, which is over 99.3 percent of all businesses in the State. These enterprises employ over 479,000 Arkansans, which makes it easy

to see how much of an impact they have on our State's economic climate. In addition to powering the economy, small businesses also contribute to the communities they operate in. They embody the American values and ideals that have helped to build our country—hard work, a willingness to take risks, and a vision for opportunity. That is why we recognized the importance of entrepreneurs by passing a resolution designating May 5 through 11 as National Small Business Week.

I encourage people across my home State and throughout the country to support small businesses in their communities, especially this week. I also encourage my colleagues to continue listening to the concerns and to the advice of our entrepreneurs and of those they employ.

We can build on our positive economic growth by pursuing more policies that will help our small businesses succeed. The show of support certainly means a lot to the folks who own these companies and their employees who count on them to earn their livelihoods. It also serves as a way to further cultivate and reward the entrepreneurial spirit that is at the very heart of America.

I applaud the men and women in Arkansas and across the United States who work incredibly hard as they run their own businesses and chase the American dream. This week, we celebrate them and our Nation's intrepid, enterprising legacy that helps make us who we are.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues and celebrate National Small Business Week. I love this poster that they have prepared today because Tennessee is right at the heart of this.

For over five decades, National Small Business Week has been an opportunity to recognize the tremendous contribution of small businesses and entrepreneurs to the American economy.

We know and we hear it said so often that there is nothing small about small business because of the economic impact it has. I tell you, the statistics really do bear that out.

According to the most recent report from the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy for my home State of Tennessee, there are over 603,000 small businesses located in our State. Now, 99.4 percent of all the businesses in our State are small businesses. That speaks to the health and vitality of our economy.

Collectively, these small businesses employ over 1.1 million people, and that accounts for 42.3 percent of the entire workforce in the State. So small business has an enormous footprint in the State of Tennessee.

Now, we have heard a lot about the booming economy in recent weeks, and as we celebrate Mother's Day this week—and I do hope it is a happy Mother's Day for everyone. We know

this economy that is booming, that is growing, with record-low unemployment numbers, with economic vitality, wage growth that we have not seen—we know this is an economy that makes the lives of millions of working women and those families' lives better, and we celebrate what this economy is doing for the Nation as a whole.

Specific to Tennessee, as we celebrate Mother's Day, we celebrate these women-owned businesses. What we do know from the research that is out is that Tennessee is the fifth best State in the country for female-owned small businesses and that they are seeing dynamic growth in both revenue and employment.

Now, the economic gains that have come about because of the tax cuts and the regulatory reforms that have been enacted by President Trump, voted on, pushed through by congressional Republicans, have changed the economic landscape of millions of Americans.

Since tax reform was signed into law, 3.2 million new jobs were created, 90 percent of the taxpayers have received a bigger paycheck, and jobless claims are at the lowest they have been in 50 years.

Here is the connective tissue between these encouraging stats and what I hear back in Tennessee. Because the economy is strong, now is a great time to grow or to expand or to start a new business. Entrepreneurs feel confident so they are betting on themselves and making decisions that they need to make in order to succeed: They are hiring that new employee, adding a new store or a new location, and daring to turn their dreams into a reality.

Small businesses are the key driver of our turbocharged economy, and we will continue to do all we can to help them thrive.

I will tell you also, as a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, that I want to thank those entrepreneurs who are veterans, who are stepping up at record rates in our State and are starting their small businesses.

Some of these deal with services that are needed and products that are needed by our military post or used by our National Guard. These veterans make great small business owners, and they also make great employees. The skills they learn defending our Nation while they are in uniform are uniquely well suited to succeed in business: the discipline, the focus, the resilience, the ability to plan, to adapt, to work collaboratively with others in order to get a job done.

Indeed, for themselves and their families, they are getting the job done. These are the hallmarks of our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, but they are also the qualities of successful entrepreneurs. We are thrilled they choose to call Tennessee home.

The importance of the American small business is gauged not only by facts and figures. The true value of our small businesses comes not just from their contribution to the American

economy but also their contribution to another American Dream fulfilled.

Entrepreneurship is the embodiment of the American dream. It is about men and women pursuing their passions. They work hard, save their money, make a plan, and put that plan into action. Oftentimes, they struggle, sometimes they will end up failing, but they pick themselves up, preserve their right to move forward, push forward, and they never stop trying. Our economy and our Nation are stronger and better for their efforts.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, National Small Business Week is about so much more than simply saying thank you to our small business owners and entrepreneurs. It is about recognizing everything they do for our communities. They aren't simply the economic backbone but a common thread that binds us together.

We all remember the stores we visited when we were young or with our families to pick out a new pair of shoes. They host bake sales, donate to local churches and charities, as well as support local youth teams. They invest in us, and we invest in them.

South Carolina is home to more than 400,000 small businesses employing nearly 800,000 people.

Having been a small business owner myself, I have to tell you that one of the more exciting times you could ever have in life is starting a small business. I know Senator BRAUN can talk about what ABC Sports used to call the thrill of victory as well as the agony of defeat. Sometimes, for me, the thrill of victory was when I was signing the front side of a paycheck for my employees, and the agony of defeat was when I was not signing the back side of that paycheck for myself.

Being a small business owner certainly teaches you incredible lessons about life, about people, and certainly about the community you want to serve. Owning your own small business is a rewarding and sometimes challenging experience.

As part of National Small Business Week, it is also my honor to recognize VetFriends of Mount Pleasant, SC, as the Senate's Small Business of the Day.

Dale Sutcliffe, a U.S. Marine veteran of Desert Storm, founded VetFriends nearly 20 years ago with the simple mission of reuniting veterans. Following his service, Dale recognized the benefit that reconnecting veterans could have and quickly set up a platform where veterans can reunite with their fellow servicemembers during the time in which they served our great Nation.

The VetFriends platform has over 2.5 million veteran members and has brought together thousands of veterans. In the process, the platform has helped veterans share their stories, share their photos, as well as stay in-

formed about upcoming events and reunions.

Currently, VetFriends employs over 25 South Carolinians and almost all have a close relationship with a veteran. The team at VetFriends has a longstanding tradition of supporting the veterans community and are regularly seen volunteering at the Ralph Johnson VA Medical Center. Additionally, the business has taken an active role working with the Wounded Warrior Project and Patriots Point in Charleston.

It is clear that VetFriends' values and goals not only enhance their business plan but also improve the community they belong to. VetFriends is an amazing example of what our small businesses are capable of, and I thank Dale Sutcliffe and our small business owners throughout South Carolina for pouring their heart and their soul as well as their dreams back into the community.

Let me finish by saying happy Mother's Day to all the mothers and especially my mama.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. Madam President, I was asked to bat cleanup on National Small Business Week for our conference. I have been a Main Street entrepreneur my entire life.

My wife and I moved back to our hometown in 1978. She will celebrate her 41st anniversary this September with her only job—a business in our downtown selling home accessories and gifts.

I am very proud of you, Maureen.

Three years later, I had my opportunity to stake out my attempt at being an entrepreneur. As Senator SCOTT mentioned, it is fraught with pitfalls. There is no guarantee, when you stick your neck out and want to do some enterprise—no guarantee it is going to turn out. What a thrill it is, though, when it does, and it is what drives our great country.

Enterprise in this country, from its foundation, was built upon small businesses. We have over 500,000 of them in Indiana. Those businesses created over 38,000 new jobs in the last year, but things aren't as good as they could be because as much as the tax reform did for securing the future of small business, it is not permanent. We need to make sure that is done sometime before 2025.

Manufacturing—the biggest business in Indiana since the Trump economy has created the hottest context for business, small, medium or large. Six times more jobs in President Trump's 2 years have been created in manufacturing than the last 2 years of the prior administration.

Sometimes a little business can get lucky and become a medium-size business and a large business. Mine followed that pathway. I will give you a little detail on that in a moment.

McDonald's started with one location. This summer they will add, in the

State of Indiana, 11,000 summer jobs. International companies even come to the State of Indiana because our door is open and what a great place to have a small, medium, or large business.

Saab will add a \$25 million investment in West Lafayette that will create 200 great-paying jobs.

Now back to my story. We raised a family, and I had the chance to start my business. In 17 years, it never got beyond 15 employees. That is the number of employees I started with in 1981 and that is what I had in 1998.

Perseverance, patience, reinvesting, keeping a low overhead so you can get through the scrapes that inevitably will come in an economy, and someday your day of opportunity will arise.

In the darkest hours of the great recession, when our industry shrunk by over 50 percent literally overnight, every asset I owned was a piece of commercial real estate—a warehouse. Everything I sold was an unnecessary want, not a need—auto and truck accessories. I wondered, what did the future hold?

Well, the future held the greatest opportunity I could have ever imagined because I lived my life in a way that set the stage for opportunity. I make that point because we are not doing it in this institution.

We have set ourselves up to ruin a lot of the good things that are occurring from decades and decades ago to the present if we don't get our house in order. The institution of the Federal Government should be the pride of our country. Running \$850 billion deficits and \$22 trillion in debt, that doesn't bode well for any of us. But the good news is, if we keep this economy going, I think it can go decades into the future, where we keep creating jobs and raising wages like have never been done before. But I mentioned earlier that some of us turn them into medium-size businesses and larger businesses, and so often, what got you there, you forget about.

I tell folks all the time: It doesn't matter what size business you have, if you are successful, share those benefits with your employees. Raise benefits through your 401(k) plan. Lower healthcare costs if you can, and certainly raise wages.

Make sure people look to the real world for what means the most and not to government. If you look to government, especially the Federal Government, you are going to be disappointed. The action in our country is on Main Streets in towns and cities across the country in our States.

My parting comments: The biggest companies in this country sometimes, in my opinion, behave most poorly. I am going to talk about two—Big Ag and Big Healthcare.

I took on the healthcare issue 10 years ago in my own company. Nobody should go broke because they get sick or have a bad accident. All small businesses want to offer good healthcare to their employees but can't. Why? Be-

cause the industry has gotten concentrated with huge corporations, from pharma to hospitals across the board and health insurance companies, which I had to tangle with.

I ask you to get with it, be transparent, and be competitive so you don't have a business partner that may only be the Federal Government down the road.

Big Agriculture—I want to end with this because in Joni's State, a high percentage of small businesses are farmers. Farmers take on the most difficult task of any business in our country—the weather, a high amount of assets for the income they generate. They have regulations like waters of the United States—great intentions but overbearing. There are farmers who now worry about ditch maintenance because ditches that don't have water in them most of the year are now considered waters of the United States. We have to get a better balance to where we have good regulations and not overbearing regulations.

I am asking folks in this Chamber, in this Congress, to look to get this house in order, and I am asking Big Industry—big companies in the agricultural arena and in the healthcare arena—to get their act in order so the doctors who participate within healthcare and the farmers who participate within agriculture can make an honest living. They are all small businesses, and small businesses drive this country.

Thank you.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Madam President, I might be the luckiest person in the world because I get to wake up on Sunday and spend Mother's Day, well, being a mom. I will probably spend the morning helping my 1-year-old take a few wobbly steps and then the afternoon watching my 4-year-old draw or chasing her around the house, celebrating the holiday surrounded by the people I cherish the most.

But that isn't the case for far too many other moms and kids around the country. That isn't the case for women like Denise Reed, Sybrina Fulton, or Valerie Castile, who lost their children to gun violence. That isn't the case for the hundreds of children born in the past year alone whose mothers died from preventable, pregnancy-related deaths. That certainly isn't the case for the families whom the Trump administration separated at our southern border and who still have not yet been reunited, the kids who were thrown in cages because their parents had the nerve to strive for a better life.

This Mother's Day, I am thinking of those whose hearts are hurting, those moms who would give anything for another lazy Sunday with their sons or those daughters who would do anything to hear their mother's laugh one more time.

The truth is, the women—moms or otherwise—in this country deserve bet-

ter than the status quo. We deserve more than the Trump administration, which in just 2-plus years has already changed title IX sexual assault rules to favor the accused over the survivor, tried to defund health clinics that provide prenatal care and mammograms, pushed forward healthcare proposals that would have gutted maternity coverage, and handed employers the power to decide whether women should have access to birth control.

All this—well, it is shocking but unfortunately not surprising because we knew who Donald Trump was when we elected him. He is the man who has long made clear that he does not care about women or our autonomy. He is the man who once argued that women should be punished for taking up the right to choose; who has taken pride in trying to put the government between us and our doctors; who would rather throw those doctors in jail than even pretend to care about the women who make up 51 percent of this Nation; who just 10 days ago stood on a stage in Wisconsin and lied, lied, lied, prioritizing a roar from the crowd over the safety of patients and providers at health clinics nationwide; and who just last week issued two rules that would make it easier for doctors to either discriminate against women or deny them care altogether.

So don't tell me that Trump is "pro-life" when he is pushing for rules that endanger women's lives and when he spent years trying to strip healthcare away from Americans. Don't claim that he is just trying to protect families when he is the one to blame for the inhumane policy that is ripping toddlers and babies away from mothers' arms. Don't you dare argue that he is leading the "party of life" when he will not lift a finger to stop first graders from getting massacred in classrooms by the dozen. No, Donald Trump's anti-choice stance isn't about looking out for families; it is about getting a slap on the back from his base and exerting even more control over women's bodies. It is sexist, regressive, and flatout dangerous.

But even while this administration's agenda is a travesty, it is not an anomaly; rather, it is just the latest step in the far-right's long march to strip away women's rights. I am tired of it, sick of their trying to shame women when they are the ones who should be ashamed.

So enough with the hypocrisy, with the misogyny, with some men in halcyon halls in DC arguing that they know better than moms in Illinois or Arizona or Missouri. We can and we must do better. That means fighting for everything from equal pay to better parental leave. It means proving that we care about women every day of the year, not just on one Sunday in May. That is the least that our mothers, our daughters, and our sisters deserve.

Thank you.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

Mr. SCHATZ. Madam President, it gives me no pleasure to say this, but this administration is actively doing terrible things for women and their families. They have rolled back protections for workers. They have made it easier for companies to pollute the air and the water. They have cut investments in public education. They have literally taken children away from their parents and made zero effort to reunite them. They are working as hard as possible to prevent women from having access to the healthcare they need. These are not rhetorical statements. They are policies that hurt people. They are hurting moms.

The Centers for Disease Control came out with a report just this week showing that hundreds of women die every year from pregnancy-related complications and that many of these deaths are preventable. The report finds that one of the key ways to prevent these deaths is access to proper medical care. Yet this administration has made taking away people's access to healthcare a top priority. They have put legislation in to end the Affordable Care Act. They filed lawsuits to take away protections for people with preexisting conditions. They have issued regulations that allow healthcare providers to refuse to provide care to someone based on their personal beliefs and keep healthcare providers from giving their patients full and accurate information. As we all know, they have gone after Planned Parenthood—one of the leading sources of healthcare for women—with everything they have.

I remember when I first became a Member of this body, I visited a clinic in Honolulu. I remember meeting with the staff, who told me that clinic was the only source of healthcare for most of their patients. This was the one place women could go for family planning services, counseling, and breast cancer screenings.

Planned Parenthood's entire reason for being is to help families. In a single year, they cared for 2.4 million people and provided almost 10 million individual healthcare services, including 300,000 breast cancer screenings and over 200,000 well-woman exams—all in a single year. Yet a highlight of this administration's policy on women is to attack women's health and specifically Planned Parenthood.

But we know it is not just healthcare. As I said, it is workplace safety and fairness. It is investment in public education. It is clean air and clean water. These are things that all of us care about but moms in particular.

Whatever your political persuasion, everyone has a mom. Lots of people are moms or are married to a mom. This administration is inarguably bad for moms and bad for motherhood. Moms in this country deserve better.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

IRAN

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, 5 years ago, I, along with 46 of my fellow Senators, released a letter to Iran's Ayatollah letting him know that any nuclear deal he reached with President Obama wouldn't be worth the paper it was printed on unless it was ratified as a treaty by two-thirds of the U.S. Senate. We wrote: "The next president could revoke such an executive agreement with the stroke of a pen and future Congresses could modify the terms of the agreement at any time."

A lot of people were upset by this letter, but I don't really know why. All it did was state a straightforward lesson on American civics—something any ninth grader who has read our Constitution should know. Yet the Ayatollah agreed to a deal with President Obama that was not, in fact, approved by two-thirds of the Senate. In fact, it was almost rejected by three-fifths of the Senate. Just as we cautioned, not 3 years later, a new President did, in fact, revoke that deal with the stroke of a pen.

Today is the 1-year anniversary of America's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, and a lot has happened since then.

Just this morning, Iran threatened to renew its rush to the bomb, stockpiling more uranium and producing more heavy water—even threatening to enrich nuclear fuels to dangerous levels in the months ahead if the civilized world does not cave to its demands.

We know better than to cave in to the ayatollahs. The United States will remain steadfast in our maximum pressure campaign against Iran until that regime abandons its nuclear and missile program and its support for terrorism. I welcome the news that the President is announcing new sanctions on Iran's mining industry as well.

As for our European allies and partners and members of the business community abroad, I hope Iran's threats will serve as a needed wake-up call. Any attempt to invest in Iran's market under any circumstances other than Iran's complete and verifiable cessation of its full range of malign activities will be fraught with huge legal and financial risks—huge risks. Businesses shouldn't put themselves in that compromising position, and European partners shouldn't give in to Iran's high-stakes nuclear blackmail.

Of course, today's announcement is just the latest dangerous provocation by the Iranian regime. In the past year, Iran and its well-armed proxies have continued their killing spree across the Middle East—the same spree they were on before and during the Iran nuclear deal. This time, the United States has stood up to Iran rather than rewarding its evil deeds.

We designated the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps for what it is—a foreign terrorist organization—for plotting attacks around the world and arming groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, the very

same groups that slaughtered innocent civilians in Israel just last weekend with no regard for the lives they purportedly represent in Gaza.

We reimposed sanctions on Iran that were waived by President Obama. We have also recognized Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, affirming a close ally's right to defend itself against Iranian-backed aggression. These are good things. Iran is a weaker adversary today than it was a year ago when it was flush with bribe money from its nuclear deal with the Obama administration.

Not everyone sees it that way. At least six Democratic Presidential candidates have talked about reentering this outdated obsolete nuclear deal with Iran. They would give the ayatollahs and his armies sanctions relief yet again at a time when Iran's economy is on the mat, not just in recession but in borderline depression. If we were to give them sanctions relief, we know what they would do with that money. We have seen this movie before. They would use it to build ballistic missiles, to kill and maim innocent civilians, and to fuel chaos in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and further abroad.

A return to the Iran deal would be a disastrous decision, but more importantly, such a decision would be every bit as reversible as the first. When are these people going to learn? Everybody ought to keep in mind this simple fact, whether you are a politician making promises or on the campaign trail or a business leader considering major investments in Iran.

To make it abundantly clear, on the 1-year anniversary of our withdrawal from that horrific, terrible nuclear deal, I have a gift for them all. It is the first anniversary. So it is a paper gift. I have introduced a resolution with my colleagues that reaffirms the policy of the United States to never, never allow Iran to acquire nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the resolution reaffirms that sanctions can only come off of Iran once it meets the basic conditions approved by Congress under existing law. Among other things, that law requires that Iran must stop supporting terrorism and dismantle its ballistic missile program before sanctions can be waived. They can't simply be waived by a President using his so-called pen and phone.

I hope this resolution clears up any confusion about where the United States stands with respect to Iran and for anyone considering investing in the Iranian market. America will continue to apply maximum pressure against the ayatollahs' regime so long as they continue their campaign of terror and violence against the United States and our allies throughout the Middle East, and we will continue to assist those allies as they fight against Iranian-backed aggression.

To the Ayatollah and all of the rulers of Iran: Happy anniversary.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Montana.

NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. DAINES. Madam President, it is National Small Business Week, and in Montana, small businesses are a critical part of our life. In fact, I grew up watching my parents build a small business. They are made up of hard-working families who lift up their companies and neighborhoods, and it is what keeps our economy growing and keeps our economy strong.

In fact, when I am back home in Montana and back in my hometown of Bozeman, you might find me in the morning grabbing a cup of coffee from Cold Smoke with my sweet wife Cindy, or I might be heading over to Butte. I might be picking up a new mount from my taxidermist, Marc, who does a great job there in Butte. Or maybe it is time for dinner and grabbing a bite to eat at the Mint in Belgrade. Of course, if you are over in Billings, you have to stop and get a cinnamon roll at Stella's. If you are heading through Helena, get a great lunch there at Steve's Cafe. Or if you are up in the northwest part of the State, you might grab a beer at the Cabinet Mountain Brewery. Or there is nothing like breakfast at Syke's in Kalispell.

In fact, one of the old-time favorites in Missoula is the Thunderbird Motel. They have a great owner there, Thelma, who has been a friend for years. I still remember how excited the men and women who were stationed in Afghanistan and from our very own 495th from Kalispell were when we brought over—hand-carried over to Afghanistan—back in December, some Hi-Country beef jerky from Lincoln, MT, because for them, that Hi-Country beef jerky tasted like being back home.

These mom and pop shops of Montana tell the story of the ideals that make our Nation great. In fact, in Montana, 90 percent of our businesses are small businesses—90 percent. Montana's small business owners are hard-working Montanans. They have taken a leap of faith to pursue the dream of owning their own business.

They get up early, they roll their sleeves up, and they don't stop working until they get the job done. They are folks who put everything they have into starting a business. They are working all day, oftentimes into the night, to keep that business growing. Their voices that make our economy run in Montana are seldom heard on the national stage.

Those businesses that I mentioned earlier that I like to frequent are not household names across our country. They are well-known names back in their respective communities, but they are not on the national stage, and it is my honor to be their voice, to fight for policies that make their lives back in Montana easier.

Thankfully, under Republican leadership over the last 3 years, our country has experienced record economic growth. That is not by accident.

Since we passed tax reform, over 3½ million new jobs have been added to

this economy, and we are seeing more money in the pockets of Montanans. Wages are up. Productivity is up. The unemployment rate sits at a 50. That is a five-decades-old low of 3.6 percent. Many said that can never be done. Guess what. Under President Trump's leadership, working with this Republican Congress, they have gotten it done.

I want to make sure this economic hot streak continues because our rural communities back in Montana rely on these small businesses. That is why just last month I introduced the Main Street Tax Certainty Act, which would give these small businesses permanent tax relief. When government stands out of the way, when burdensome regulations are lifted, and when Congress finally understands that it is not government that creates growth but it is the individuals—the hard-working men and women in this country—then, there is no telling how far we can go as a nation. We have to keep this economy booming, and we must keep Montana's small businesses thriving.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from West Virginia.

AMERICAN MINERS ACT

Mr. MANCHIN. Madam President, I rise today to call for immediate action on the American Miners Act. We have an obligation to the miners across America who have served our Nation by providing us with energy through our greatest advancements. They deserve to know that their pensions, which they rightfully worked for, will be funded fully, and they deserve to have accessible healthcare, which was guaranteed to them as well.

As the Senate fails to act, we continue to put our retired miners' healthcare and pension benefits in jeopardy yet again. I have been working with everyone from every angle in order to prevent our miners from losing their healthcare and benefits. But, once again, they are facing a deadline that puts their whole livelihood at risk.

This has been a long fight, and it is far from over. Everyone who has joined me in this journey understands that fighting for working people is what we were sent here to do. These retired miners are walking the halls and fighting for what is rightfully theirs. I am doing this for them. I promised them that this body will not abandon them, and I refuse to let them down.

To give you some background, the 1974 pension plan will be insolvent by 2022 if we do not act. We needed to act a year ago or so, and we haven't done it. It is a shame. Miners who receive their healthcare through companies that went bankrupt in 2018 are at risk of losing coverage in the coming months if we fail to act soon.

How did we get here? Unlike many other public and private pension plans, in 1974, the miners' pension plan was well managed and 94 percent funded prior to the crash of 2008. However, the

financial crisis hit at a time when this plan had its highest payment obligations. If the plan becomes insolvent, these beneficiaries will face benefit cuts, and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation will assume billions of dollars in liabilities.

To address these issues, the American Miners Act would shore up the 1974 pension plan, which is headed for insolvency due to coal company bankruptcies and the 2008 financial crisis. It would ensure that the miners who are at risk due to 2018 coal company bankruptcies will not lose their healthcare and extend the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund tax at \$1.10 per ton of underground-mined coal and 55 cents per ton of surface-mined coal for 10 years.

West Virginia has more retired union coal miners than any other State. More than 27,000 retirees live in West Virginia alone.

I am going to read a letter to give you perspective on what we are dealing with. Richard from Morgantown, WV, said:

I am writing this letter with respect and concern to preserve our pension. My name is Richard. I live in Morgantown, West Virginia. My career as an underground coal miner lasted 35 years. I am soon to be 68 years old. Working underground all those years, the physical labor tends to take a toll on a person's body. I receive a monthly pension of \$1,466 a month from the UMWA Pension Fund. This monthly pension is used to pay utility bills, purchase groceries, and everyday necessities. I am also helping to support my five year old grandson and his mother, who doesn't earn enough for them to live on their own. You see, my daughter became addicted to prescription opioids after having serious medical problems. She has been clean for five years and is trying to rebuild her life, but we are supporting her and her son. My pension is a major source of income for my family and it would be devastating if I were to lose any of it. I can't imagine how we would survive. Our county and surrounding counties are heavily dependent on the coal miners' pension. Should we lose our pension, the economy in this area would plummet. I am also writing as a voice for those who are unable to write to you. I am asking your committee to carefully consider the bill to preserve our pensions.

I have another one from Gary from Southern West Virginia who wrote:

I have worked in the [United Mine Workers] since 1973 at Cannelton Coal. I worked about 13½ years, then had a lay-off in the early 80's, had to find work in another field, and got a job driving a school bus for 25 years. I'm retired now, but I still sub-drive for the county, was in [a] . . . bus driver association, and also drive a bus for Ace Adventure Resort. I am 74 now and still very active in the work force. I thank God for my health. I am still married to a wonderful woman, had 4 kids, 3 of them have passed away, one from cancer, one [from] allergy, my daughter died from a drug overdose. I am still paying on my daughter's funeral expenses. This retirement check that I get every month is a big help getting this bill paid, also had to pay on one of my son's funeral expenses. Since 2011 it has been very hard trying to keep your head above water. I only get \$261 a month but I am so thankful for what I get. It really helps out a lot. Please find a way so we can keep our retirement check. We will keep on praying for all you guys who are fighting for us.

I just want to finish by saying that these are people who have gone to work every day. They didn't take the money home because they were letting that go into their retirement pension, and they thought that was being taken care of and managed properly. It wasn't their fault. They have already paid, and now because of bankruptcies and financial collapses, they can't get the money. It is wrong. It is not who we are as a country.

Through the bankruptcy laws that we have in America today, you can be in line if you are a financial institution—somebody that basically is in line before the person we are basically here to serve. The miners who get these pensions average \$460 a month. That is the average pension they receive. That is not much. Most of these are widows, too, because the husbands have passed away.

So I am asking—this has been a bipartisan bill. I appreciate all of my colleagues on the Republican side, all of my Democratic colleagues, and everybody for working and really trying to take care of the people whom we made a promise to. This was a pension that was guaranteed by Harry S. Truman with John L. Lewis at the time. It is in stone. It is there for us, and it is basically one we cannot walk away from.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wisconsin.

HEALTHCARE

Ms. BALDWIN. I rise today to talk about an issue that is top of mind for women in Wisconsin and across this country, and that is healthcare.

Let's take a look at what we have seen from this President and congressional Republicans over the past 2½ years. There have been repeated attempts to repeal healthcare legislatively, which would result in the loss of healthcare for millions of Americans. The administration itself has acted in a way that undermines the Affordable Care Act, which frankly sabotages the guaranteed healthcare protections that millions of women and their families rely on. An ongoing lawsuit is making its way through the courts that would, if the administration had its way, result in overturning or striking down the Affordable Care Act.

Last Saturday was May 4. It was actually the 2-year anniversary of House Republicans passing legislation that would repeal the Affordable Care Act. I remember that day, and, in particular, I remember watching the ensuing celebration, which was conducted at the Rose Garden at a press conference, among President Trump and Speaker Ryan and others. There was literally backslapping and high-fiving going on because they had taken the first step toward taking people's healthcare away. It was hard to believe.

Just a few months later, we saw three courageous Republican colleagues in this Chamber—Senators McCain, MURKOWSKI, and COLLINS—join

every Democrat in this Chamber in voting against repealing the Affordable Care Act. They listened to their constituents. They listened to the families in their States.

I, too, voted to defeat that legislation that would have repealed the Affordable Care Act, and I have done likewise on a number of other particularly partisan efforts by President Trump or congressional Republicans that would have taken away some of the protections that the people of the United States and Wisconsin enjoy. I did so. I voted no on those efforts because the people of my State didn't send me here to take their healthcare away. They actually sent me here to work across party lines and make things better.

Throughout that summer—that was the summer of 2017—individuals across this country stood up, and they called their elected representatives with one simple message: Protect our care. When congressional Republicans failed to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the Trump administration kind of doubled down and went to work, really undermining and sabotaging our healthcare system, rewriting some of the rules on guaranteed healthcare protections that millions of people rely on.

For example, the administration ended something that we called the cost-sharing reduction payments. These were payments that helped lower out-of-pocket expenses for people participating in the Affordable Care Act exchanges, and this was a critical component. So when that was done, it meant that there were higher out-of-pocket costs for almost 90,000 Wisconsinites.

The Trump administration also slashed funding for outreach efforts to help people know about the open enrollment periods and to know that they needed to sign up for the healthcare that is offered on the Affordable Care Act exchanges.

Trusted navigator programs, like those in my State, have had their funding cut by nearly 90 percent in the past 3 years. These navigators programs are so helpful to people—particularly people in rural areas—because they help to guide people through the process of obtaining affordable, comprehensive, healthcare protection and coverage. It means that when these programs are sabotaged, fewer people each year will be able to get the help they need to find and enroll in health insurance on the exchanges.

The administration is also promoting something that I call junk plans. These are junk insurance plans. Why do I call them that? Because they are relieved of really having to do what you buy insurance to do. They do not have to cover people with preexisting conditions. They can say no, or they can charge a rate so high that no one could possibly afford it. They could have an annual limit or a lifetime limit, or they could simply carve out the preexisting condition and not offer coverage for it.

These junk plans also have no obligation to cover any of the essential health benefits as identified in the Affordable Care Act. In Wisconsin, none of these junk plans are required to cover maternity care—none of them. This takes us back to the days before the Affordable Care Act, when no plans in Wisconsin's individual marketplace covered maternity care. Beyond just encouraging individuals to sign up for these bad and very limited policies, the administration supports allowing taxpayer dollars to subsidize these plans. So American taxpayers are potentially footing the bill for junk health insurance—some of which isn't really worth the paper it is written on.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office just announced that, as a result of these activities—the sabotage—2 million more people will be without health insurance by the year 2020. That is just around the corner. After the Affordable Care Act went into effect, we saw more Americans than ever before gain access to health insurance. But according to the Congressional Budget Office, during President Trump's tenure in the White House, 1 million more people each year will have lost health insurance.

The Trump administration is literally taking us backward on this matter, and American families are paying the price. I wish I could say it stops here, but there is more.

President Trump and Attorney General Barr are now taking sides in a case that is pending in the Federal courts. They are taking the position that the court should strike down the entire Affordable Care Act. This lawsuit threatens to take away guaranteed health protections and raise costs for Wisconsinites and, frankly, for all Americans who have preexisting health conditions.

In Wisconsin, there are more than 2 million people in our State with some sort of preexisting health condition, and they would stand to lose their guaranteed protections. It would once again give insurance companies the power to charge women higher premiums than men or to deny health coverage for women who get pregnant because it is considered, by the way, a preexisting condition.

Over the past few weeks, I have been meeting with Wisconsinites who, frankly, want to know why the President is working so hard to repeal or strike down or overturn their care, raise costs, and take away their protections. They are really frightened. They are frightened that if this lawsuit succeeds, insurance companies will again be able to deny coverage or charge higher premiums for the more than 133 million Americans who have some sort of preexisting health condition.

I got to hear from Lindsey in Milwaukee, WI. Lindsey is a breast cancer survivor. She will be on hormonal therapy for another 2 years, and she will continue to need MRIs, mammograms, and blood work each year to be sure

that her cancer has not returned. Lindsey is worried that if the Affordable Care Act is repealed or overturned in court, she could lose her healthcare coverage because of a lifetime maximum, or she could be charged more because she has a preexisting condition.

Just recently, I met with Grace in Green Bay. Grace is 15 years old, and she has been living with type 1 diabetes since she was just 2 years old. In order to manage her disease, she needs insulin and various other medical supplies that cost \$1,500 per month. Right now those supplies are covered by her family's insurance, but Grace understands that, without the Affordable Care Act, her insurance company would again have the power to charge her more or deny her coverage because her diabetes is a preexisting condition, and she could also be at risk of reaching her lifetime limit.

Grace and her mom are worried about the Trump administration's lawsuit to ask the court to strike down the Affordable Care Act. She is worried—they are worried—about Republican attempts to eliminate protections for people with preexisting conditions, and they know that President Trump has no plan to protect people with preexisting conditions. He never has, and I suspect he never will.

The House recently passed a resolution that calls on the Trump administration to reverse its position on repealing the entire Affordable Care Act. Last year I heard several Senate Republicans promise to protect people with preexisting health conditions. More than one of my new Republican colleagues campaigned on it in 2018. Here is their chance to prove it. Let's vote on this resolution in the Senate so every Senator in this body can be on record protecting healthcare for people with preexisting conditions. It is time. It is time for Senate Republicans to take a stand against President Trump's sabotage so we can start working in a bipartisan way to expand coverage and lower healthcare costs.

As I have said in this Chamber many times before, the people of Wisconsin want both parties in Congress to work together and to make things better by making healthcare more affordable and taking on rising prescription drug costs. I heard from countless Wisconsinites who are struggling to afford the prescription medication that they need to live, and prices keep going up year after year.

Jackie from Muskego was diagnosed with an incurable blood cancer in August of 2015. She takes a drug called REVLIMID for her cancer, and her medication costs her up to \$21,000 per year just to stay alive.

Since the beginning of 2017, Celgene has increased the price of REVLIMID by nearly 25 percent.

President Trump campaigned on lowering the cost of prescription drugs, but so far we are not seeing any results. It has been all talk. Instead, with his tax bill, President Trump gave drug

companies a huge corporate tax break as they continued to increase the cost of prescription drugs.

Pfizer, for example, got an estimated 11 billion dollars in tax breaks. Then, they announced that they were raising the list price of 41 of their prescription drugs that they manufacture. You know, it is time to take action, to hold these drug companies accountable, and it is why this week I am introducing a bipartisan plan with Senator BRAUN of Indiana to require basic transparency and accountability for drug companies that increase their list prices.

Drug corporations are making prescription drugs more and more expensive with no systematic transparency for taxpayers. Meanwhile, American families, taxpayers, and our healthcare system are footing the bill for these price increases, and then are forced to pay more still at the pharmacy for the medications they need.

We need greater transparency. We need greater accountability for drug corporations that are jacking up the costs for families in need of affordable, lifesaving treatments.

I wanted to thank Senator BRAUN for working with me on this effort, as well as Senator MURKOWSKI for joining this effort, because both Democrats and Republicans agree that prescription drug costs are too high in this country. So let's work together to bring relief to American families.

I strongly believe that if both parties look past the partisan debate in Washington, we can find common ground on solutions that work for the American people, and I stand ready to work with any of my colleagues in the Senate on solutions that help to lower costs and expand healthcare coverage for our constituents.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

MUELLER REPORT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I want to address my colleagues with three different subjects. The first one is very, very short. It is things that are being talked about right now, particularly in the other body.

Many in the media seem very, very unhappy with the results of the Mueller report, or they might be embarrassed that the world knows that they sold a bunch of snake oil for the past 2 years, talking for 2 years about collusion with Russia, and now after the Mueller report has come out, they find out that the jig is up.

I hope the media will pursue the origins of the Russian collusion investigation with the very same vigor over the last 2 years that they pursued the collusion narrative. It will go a long way, then, to restore the media's damaged credibility, and knowing how all of this started will help us to prevent such a fiasco from ever happening again.

MIDWEST FLOODING

Mr. President, for the third or fourth time, I want to visit with my colleagues about the flooding in the Mid-

west and particularly my State of Iowa. This is ongoing flooding in the Midwest and particularly Iowa, and it is not going to end for a while.

Flooding on the Mississippi has gotten worse, as flood protection has not been adequate in several areas of Scott County along the Mississippi to deal with historic water levels.

Parts of the downtown area in Davenport are now inundated with floodwaters. This picture is a perfect example of it. I think you probably have seen this on television quite a lot. This area includes many businesses and homes. It appears that this will be the most damaging flood in Davenport's history. Unfortunately, the National Weather Service reports that this week's forecast is filled with rain for the whole of our State of Iowa, which could cause additional flooding or re-flooding throughout the State.

The Missouri River could rise 2 to 4 feet, depending on location and tributary flows. As of right now, most of southwest Iowa is without even minimal flood protection due to the breached, overtopped, or compromised levees caused by the unique weather system that brought record flows down the lower Missouri River earlier this year. The Army Corps of Engineers is working to fix the large breaches, but communities are threatened by even minor rain.

This recovery will be long, and Federal resources will continue to be needed as the restoration and the rebuilding that are necessary take place. I am committed to continuing to work at the Federal level to help Iowa and our neighboring States through this whole process.

In April, the Environment and Public Works Committee held a field hearing on the Midwest floods chaired by Senator ERNST of Iowa, and she and I, along with other Senators, had a chance to question the Army Corps of Engineers on its management of the Missouri River.

For years, I have worked with several of my congressional colleagues to make flood control the No. 1 priority of the Corps in its management of the Missouri River. Protection of life and property should take precedence over recreation and experiments that may or may not help endangered species and the other purposes of the river identified in the Army Corps of Engineers' master manual.

From 1979 until the changes in that manual in 2004, the manual stated that the No. 1 priority was flood control; in other words, protecting life and property was more important than anything else. Changes to the manual made in the year 2004 made it so that the Corps must consider other purposes for the river. They have to balance these other purposes with flood control.

Since 2004, there has been a dramatic increase in flood frequency and floodwater levels. The river's flood-carrying capacity has greatly changed, and

there were no natural events before 2011 that could have caused these changes.

I reiterate—life safety and property should be the No. 1 priority of the Corps in its management of the Missouri River.

My colleagues and I have also heard complaints about the unresponsive Corps and the lack of communication with local residents about the floods. After the 2011 floods, some communications were enhanced; however, a lack of updated data and communication was still one of the most common complaints.

As a direct result of meetings with local levee sponsors, homeowners, small businesses, farmers, and other stakeholders, a group of 10 Senators requested that the Corps begin sending email updates to all local sponsors on a weekly basis starting within 30 days. These updates should include snowpack levels, available flood control storage in the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System, cubic feet per second release rates at the system's dams, and flow rates to key tributaries, as well as current National Weather Service precipitation forecasts and the spring flood outlook.

Today, the Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing on oversight of the Public Works Program. My colleagues on the committee are asking Corps leadership about flood control on the Missouri River and what emergency resources are necessary to help the Corps with the recovery process.

With over 100 miles of levees needing repair, we know that additional resources will be needed. We also know that the State of Iowa, Iowa communities, and individual Iowans will need assistance from programs such as the community development block grant and Economic Development Administration disaster accounts.

I have been working with my colleagues on the Senate Appropriations Committee to ensure that critical funding for Iowa is provided through the emergency supplemental appropriations. I filed an amendment to the disaster bill, along with my colleagues from the Midwest, to help farmers who have lost an estimated \$17.3 million to \$34 million of their on-farm stored corn and soybeans. My amendment would allow impacted midwestern farmers to address agricultural losses not covered by crop insurance or other programs. I will continue to provide the Appropriations Committee with damage and need assessments for recovery in Iowa as we get further clarity on the actual numbers.

Furthermore, several Midwest Senators and I introduced the Disaster Tax Relief Act of 2019. This bill includes a series of disaster tax relief provisions that will help American families and businesses recover from the terrible disasters that have occurred so far in 2019, including the Midwest flooding.

The disaster tax relief provisions we have worked on will reduce penalties

and make it easier for people to access retirement funds so that individuals and families can get back on their feet faster and rebuild their lives. They also make it easier for disaster victims to claim personal casualty losses, and they suspend certain limitations on charitable contributions to encourage more donations for disaster relief. For businesses affected by the disasters, this tax relief is available to help them retain employees while the businesses get back up and running.

Iowa Governor Reynolds and her administration are working closely with FEMA on adding Scott County to the existing disaster declaration and on other key needs, such as housing assistance for communities in southwest Iowa that have very few existing options for people to return to or stay in those communities.

I have talked to Acting Administrator Gaynor of FEMA about this matter and urged him to promptly work on getting this much needed assistance to those in need.

Governor Reynolds has also established a flood recovery advisory board to coordinate flood recovery and rebuilding efforts across Federal, State, and local levels of government. As an ex-officio member, I am looking forward to participating in these meetings to ensure that the Federal Government is offering needed assistance to Iowans affected by the flooding.

This isn't a case of our doing something new through the Federal Government for people hurt by natural disasters; this is a case of following policy that has been part of the Federal Government for several decades that the Federal Government is an insurer of last resort for natural disasters that can't be anticipated and appropriate insurance provided in advance.

So I expect that the Federal Government will do exactly what we have done for decades and do it in a non-partisan way, almost in a consensus way, as we have in the past, and replenish these funds that provide the money for this disaster.

I happen to appreciate the stamina and determination of Iowans in fighting these natural disasters. Many of these people I am referring to have a long recovery ahead of them. This Iowa spirit will help us pull through these difficult times stronger and better, just as we have in the past.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Madam President, on another matter—relatively shorter compared to what I just said about flooding—millions of Americans rely on lifesaving prescription medicine.

I am here to report to my colleagues what Secretary Azar announced earlier today about making available information on the price of drugs on television advertising that you see so often about drugs—all kinds of information but not much information about what a drug costs, and the public ought to know that.

Americans across the country expect and depend upon breakthrough drugs

to live longer, healthier lives; however, these miracle medicines won't save lives if people can't afford to take them.

As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I have been taking a close look at the drug supply chain in the United States. I am working to lower drug prices.

By the way, this is being handled in not only a bipartisan way in our committee, but I believe this will also end up being very bicameral. The Finance Committee has held a series of hearings on this issue. So far, we have heard from economists, executives from the pharmaceutical industry, and pharmacy benefit managers. I have also introduced a handful of bipartisan bills to increase competition. These bills are bipartisan, and now we are finding they are even bicameral. In fact, the House of Representatives tends to be ahead of us here in the Senate on these issues, so there is bipartisan momentum going to help us accomplish our goals.

Perhaps more importantly—and I don't think he gets enough credit for this—we also have President Trump leading the battle from the White House, based on a speech he made in June last year and based on several steps Secretary Azar has taken to carry out the edict from President Trump to lower the prices of prescription drugs. What was announced today is the most recent step in that direction. I am going to get to that in just a minute.

There is one common denominator contributing to the high prices Americans pay for prescription drugs. It boils down to one word—secrecy. What Secretary Azar did today is attacking that secrecy. There is zero price transparency in the U.S. healthcare system.

In our system of free enterprise, competition and transparency drives innovation. It drives higher quality, and it lowers costs. Americans have to hunt for a good bargain. You can bet your bottom dollar, Iowans know where to fill up their gasoline tanks, and they do it, in most instances, I will bet, at the most affordable place. When there is no transparency, there is no price comparison. That is a big reason there is sticker shock at the pharmacy counter, and American consumers and taxpayers are of course paying the price.

The pharmaceutical industry spends a boatload on direct-to-consumer advertising, which is to the tune of \$6 billion a year. That is probably why the average American today sees nine prescription drug ads every day. The Food and Drug Administration regulates these ads for truthfulness and requires the disclosure of side effects, but the industry however is not required to disclose to consumers how much drugs cost. Now that is about to change, and that happened this morning.

I am glad Secretary Azar is making good on President Trump's commitment to lower drug prices for Americans that he announced in a speech last

June. Health and Human Services has finalized its rule to require price disclosure on TV ads for prescription drugs. Price transparency is a critical remedy to help cure the high cost of prescription drugs in America. These regulations will help toward that. It is not a final solution.

Final solutions are going to come in bipartisan and bicameral legislation that we are going to consider later this year. Just to throw out a compliment to Senator DURBIN of Illinois, because he and I worked on this very subject that Senator Azar announced a solution for by regulation, we tried to get this in a requirement in legislation that went to the President last year. We did get it through the U.S. Senate. It did not get through the House of Representatives. Secretary Azar found, through reading laws we passed many years ago, that he had the authority to do what the House of Representatives a year ago didn't have guts enough to do—take on the pharmaceutical companies—because they opposed the Durbin-Grassley amendment. Now it has been done as a result of regulation by Secretary Azar, which is the direct result of instructions given to Secretary Azar by President Trump back in June of last year that we have to do something to reduce drug prices.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). The Senator from New Hampshire.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, as Mother's Day approaches, I rise to join my Democratic colleagues in sharing our constituents' stories about the importance of protecting women's access to healthcare.

No matter where they live and no matter their economic status, women in our country deserve access to comprehensive preventive care and family planning services that will enable them to stay healthy and to thrive. We know centers like Planned Parenthood have made a huge difference in the lives of the women they serve. My office recently heard from a woman named Ashley from Hooksett, who said:

I am safe, healthy, and educated thanks to Planned Parenthood.

She continues speaking about Planned Parenthood:

When I was fifteen, they were there to help me understand the changes that my body was going through and provide me with the information I needed to keep myself healthy and protected.

Throughout the rest of my teenage years, I have trusted Planned Parenthood to provide me with all of my routine healthcare procedures.

Ashley continues:

In more desperate times, they were there to explain my options and support my decisions with anonymity and compassion.

Ashley goes on to say:

I am deeply concerned about the Title 10 gag rule and the implications it may have on my getting the care I need.

I'm thankful for elected officials who are fighting back and speaking out for me and

the thousands of people like me who deserve access to quality, affordable care, no matter their income or zip code.

Ashley's story is one of thousands that speak to the importance of title X-supported health centers, including Planned Parenthood, which are a major source of preventive care and reproductive health services, including cancer screenings, birth control, HIV and STI tests, and counseling services.

In New Hampshire, title X-funded centers deliver care to nearly 18,000 Granite Staters annually, and title X-supported Planned Parenthood centers serve 60 percent of those 18,000 Granite Staters. This is why the Trump administration's actions to discriminate against providers and to cut investments in family planning clinics are so dangerous, and it is why we have to keep fighting for women like Ashley, who are rightfully concerned about this constant barrage of attacks on healthcare.

I am going to continue standing with my Democratic colleagues on behalf of women's constitutionally protected rights and against the Trump administration's partisan attacks on women's access to healthcare.

NOMINATION OF JANET DHILLON

Mr. President, I rise to express my disappointment about the confirmation earlier today of Janet Dhillon to the position of Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, EEOC.

In December, I joined Senator MURRAY on the floor to express my concern about the fact that Republicans were blocking a well-qualified nominee, Chai Feldblum, to the EEOC.

The EEOC is a vital and bipartisan agency that enforces workers' civil rights and helps protect them from harassment and discrimination while they are on the job. The EEOC has long operated with bipartisan support and requires a quorum of its five members to decide the cases before the agency, cases which include racial discrimination, gender discrimination, age discrimination, and the discrimination against people who experience disabilities.

The partisan obstruction of the Feldblum nomination marked a significant break in precedent for how we nominate members to this Board, and the administration still has not nominated a replacement for Ms. Feldblum. The Senate should not have moved forward until that happened.

It is also clear that Ms. Dhillon would not fulfill the duties that the EEOC is entrusted with, particularly with protecting workers and ensuring that members of the LGBTQ community are not discriminated against. Ms. Dhillon has served as a leader of the Retail Litigation Center, which has long opposed pro-consumer and pro-employee policies.

Additionally, during her nomination hearing before the HELP Committee, Ms. Dhillon would not commit to maintaining the current EEOC position that the Civil Rights Act forbids employ-

ment discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation, saying "that current law is in flux."

For a Commission that is tasked with enhancing workers' rights and protections, we cannot have a nominee with a record of putting corporations first and who is unwilling to ensure that LGBTQ people are not discriminated against in the workplace.

I oppose this nomination, and I am disappointed that more of my colleagues did not do the same.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, this coming Sunday, mothers and other special women who are mother figures and caregivers for our children across the country will be honored for the important work they do to nurture the next generation.

Many moms will receive cards and flowers. Some will enjoy breakfast in bed or dinner out. A few lucky ones might get plaster handprints or handmade mugs—I love those. These gifts, no matter what they are, will be treasured because when it comes right down to it, all moms really want are a couple of things. They want their children to be happy, and they want their children to be healthy.

Unfortunately, thanks to this administration's continuing attacks on our healthcare, a lot of mothers can no longer count on that. Just ask Rachel whose daughter Alice was born in Detroit with a heart condition called Shone's complex. When Alice was only 1 day old, she had her first open heart surgery. Think about that. She was 1 day old. Four years later, she has an artificial heart valve, a love of dancing, and the biggest grin you have ever seen. She also has what the insurance companies call a preexisting condition. She will have to take heart medication for the rest of her life.

Alice's mom, Rachel, writes:

Her hospital stays and medications cost well over a million dollars—closer to two million. Without the (Affordable Care Act), our family would be bankrupt, worrying about how to pay for her life-saving medications.

No mom should have to worry about going bankrupt because her child was born with a heart condition. It could happen to any of us. No family should go broke paying for the medication that is keeping their child alive. Alice deserves better, and Alice's mom deserves better too.

I have said it before, and I will say it over and over again: Healthcare is personal. It is not political. We should be working across the aisle to expand access to care, improve quality, reduce costs, and we should be doing something to resolve the maternal and infant mortality crisis that is happening right now in the United States of America so Mother's Day is a day of joy instead of a day of sorrow.

Instead, we find ourselves fighting an administration that will not stop trying to take away the protections that

people like Alice count on and that thousands, millions across the country count on. In fact, the U.S. Department of Justice last month agreed with a Federal judge in Texas who said the entire Affordable Care Act must be struck down, and that includes coverage for those with preexisting conditions.

Not to be outdone, the Senate Republicans passed a budget resolution out of committee that includes repeal of the Affordable Care Act with no replacement. What would that mean for Michigan families? Our Healthy Michigan Program that provides healthcare to more than 650,000 Michiganders, gone. Children staying on their parents insurance until age 26, gone. Lower drug prices for seniors, gone. Protections for people with preexisting conditions, gone. That would be horrible news for Alice and every other Michigan child born with a heart condition or any other health challenge.

So what is the Republican alternative to the ACA? They don't have one, but don't worry. President Trump says Republicans will unveil a "really great" healthcare plan after the 2020 election—after the 2020 election.

In the meantime, the Affordable Care Act could be struck down in the courts, with the support of the Trump administration, and Alice and her mom could really be out of luck.

In honor of Mother's Day, here is what we should be doing together. We should reaffirm the Affordable Care Act's protections for Alice and all people with preexisting conditions. We should, once again, guarantee that every insurance plan covers prenatal and maternity care—by the way, instead of the junk plans the administration is approving right now that don't cover prenatal and maternity care. We should also strengthen healthcare for moms and babies through the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid, which cover about half of the births in our country.

A few years ago, the Finance Committee reported out a bipartisan bill that I led with Senator GRASSLEY. It was called the Quality Care for Moms and Babies Act. This bill would create a set of maternal and infant quality care measures in the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid. The goal is simple: improving maternal and infant health outcomes.

It is amazing that we don't have uniform quality health standards across the country. The Quality Care for Moms and Babies Act will help make sure that every mom gets the best pregnancy care possible and every baby gets a healthy start. That is what we should be passing.

In America today, that is, unfortunately, not the case. Our maternal mortality rate is climbing. African-American women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than are other American women, and our infant mortality rate ranks a shameful 32 among the world's

35 wealthiest nations—32 out of 35 in our great country.

We need to change this so more moms and their children will enjoy a happy Mother's Day. Moms like Rachel shouldn't be spending their Mother's Day worrying about what will happen to their children if the Republicans succeed in undoing the Affordable Care Act.

In thinking back on Alice's diagnosis, Rachel said:

I cannot express how stressful and gut-wrenching a time this was for my family. I am thankful every day for the Affordable Care Act.

Moms deserve more than flowers and a card. They deserve the peace of mind that comes from knowing their children are born as healthy as possible and will have the healthcare coverage they need. Our moms gave us life. This Mother's Day, let's pay it forward.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING ELLIS "REED" PARLIER AND RILEY HOWELL

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I come here with a heavy heart.

On April 30, at 4:40 p.m., a shooting occurred in the Kennedy Building on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. It is a college campus. It is only about 15 minutes from my house. The shooting occurred on the last day of classes. When a lot of family members and friends were thinking about graduation and thinking about what they were going to do over the summer, their lives were shattered. I am here to celebrate the lives of two of the victims.

Before I do that, I thank all of the first responders and the people on campus who did an extraordinary job. The first among them would be Chancellor Dubois, and there are so many more first responders.

What makes this particularly difficult for me is the loss of life of two young men—one who was 19, Ellis "Reed" Parlier, and Riley Howell, who was 21 years old. These kids were in school.

One, Ellis, enrolled in 2017. He loved video games. He wanted to be a video game developer. He was a volunteer. He actually tutored middle schoolers on computer programming. His professor described him as independent and motivated.

Another young man, Riley, who has an extraordinary story within this horrible act, enrolled in UNC Charlotte in 2018. He had gone to A-B Tech before that. He was in environmental studies. He loved the outdoors. He loved Star Wars. He loved pizza and playing soccer. He was just a normal kid who was

going to college. He was also enrolled in the ROTC at UNC Charlotte. What makes his story extraordinary are the accounts from police officers. If you understand the Kennedy Building, there are a lot of people around and a lot of classrooms. There are a lot of potential victims. This young man actually charged the gunman. Although he lost his own life, most police credit him with saving the lives of so many more.

So, on this sad day that we will never forget—the day of April 30—I come before this body to let them know and their families know that we are praying for them.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, typically, when we talk about Federal employees or a Federal Agency, the story starts something like this. There was a mixup in paperwork for our constituent who had Social Security Administration retirement benefits. She ended up not having Part B Medicare coverage until later, and there was a lapse in coverage.

Everyone gets frustrated over the mixup, the dropped paperwork, the problem, and they never hear the story of Amber Craft, who works in the Tulsa Social Security office. She chased the whole issue down. She did everything possible with the payment center to get inputs switched on the Medicare application and ended up getting the constituent's coverage to begin in the desired month to be able to get them taken care of. They were taken care of on their medical bills because a Federal employee saw the gap, ran to the need, and helped somebody in our State.

This is Public Service Recognition Week, and I want to take a little bit of time because in this body, as with many people in the Nation, we catch ourselves at times complaining more than we praise. There are a lot of people who are scattered around the Nation right now serving their neighbors as Federal employees. We have a lot of those in Oklahoma, and there are some pretty remarkable folks who are my neighbors whom I get the opportunity to meet with.

There are over 93,000 Federal employees, both active and retired, both Federal and on the Postal Service side—93,000 just in my State in Oklahoma—and that doesn't include the many teachers, firefighters, first responders, and other folks who work with public agencies on the city, State, and county levels as well. We are grateful to those folks because they make an incredible difference.

There are folks like Martha Gibson, who works in the VA center in Muskogee. She works in the benefits office, taking care of trying to get benefits for our veterans when there are problems—and there have been problems at times. Martha works incredibly

well with our team. As we get a call from a constituent and try to chase down the issue to be able to help figure out how we can resolve it, Martha is typically the one we call in the Muskogee office, and Martha, quite frankly, pretty often gets it solved—not just helping us but helping other Oklahomans.

Alexandria Hyatt is another good one to be able to talk about. She works in the Enterprise Services Center at the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center with the FAA in Oklahoma City. She is an exceptional example of a Federal employee who not only works incredibly hard—not just for the FAA but for other Agencies, as well, that the FAA serves through the Enterprise Services Center—but she is one of those folks who we are glad is our neighbor.

You see, she is a Federal employee, but she also, just last year, in 2018, gave 850 hours away of her volunteer time serving with welfare agencies, working on weekends, and using her own leave. She is a licensed journeyman for HVAC. So she finds places where she can use that skill to serve other people, including putting in duct work and insulation, working on mold remediation, first aid, and teaching.

After Hurricane Katrina, she spent 3 weeks roofing and providing mold remediation in the Hurricane Katrina area. In 2015, she spent 6 weeks in New York City insulating and inspecting HVAC supply vents on residency floors. After Hurricane Irma, she spent 2 weeks repairing and installing roofs.

She is a Federal employee. She gives away her time, not just in her day job but in serving people on nights and weekends and taking her own vacation on this.

We have Donald O'Connor, who spent 50 years as a civil servant. He also served Active Duty in the Air Force and in the Air National Guard for 30 years. He is a pretty remarkable servant with a pretty long legacy.

Bryan Whittle is another FAA employee and an Oklahoma National Guardsman. He served very faithfully both for the Oklahoma National Guard and the FAA. It was last year when he walked into a restaurant in Oklahoma City and heard and saw a gunman who was opening fire in a restaurant. Bryan was one of them who actually ran toward the shots, and in a historic work and in a heroic act, he stopped a shooting at a restaurant in Oklahoma City, because this Federal employee and Guardsman actually engaged to be able to serve.

We have Lieutenant Wayland Cubit. He is from the Oklahoma City Police Department. He has a program that he actually works very actively in called the Family Awareness and Community Teamwork program, or FACT. He spends a lot of time working with students trying to help to engage people with police officers, because a lot of times kids grow up in neighborhoods and communities or maybe in families where they don't hear positive things

about their police departments. So he is constantly reaching out to help people. He is active in mentoring programs.

This statement was written about him:

On any given week, Cubit and fellow officers will work with up to 100 children. Once a week they hold a character-building night in northeast Oklahoma City. Another night they host the same program in south Oklahoma City. First-time offenders come for a juvenile intervention program one night a week. FACT hosts a youth leadership academy once a month.

He is a police officer, but he is also a mentor and an activist to help the next generation of people.

We have folks like Casey Farrar. He is a lead engineer on the B-2. Now, we don't think about the B-2, other than we are very grateful that we have the B-2. But here is what is interesting. Mr. Farrar was directly responsible for saving the U.S. Air Force—therefore, the U.S. taxpayers—\$63 million in 2018. His work on several projects, including replacement of electrical cables on the rotary launcher system, as well as upgrades to those rotary launchers, improves the B-2 capabilities way into the future and will make an incredible difference and save the taxpayers a lot of money. At times, we hear about things that actually waste dollars, and we lose track of folks like this, an engineer, who just saved the taxpayer \$63 million.

Matt Lehenbauer works as an emergency management director for the city of Woodward and Woodward County. He has been very influential working through the fire seasons that we have had in northwest Oklahoma. He is one of those folks who is actually helping to protect his neighbors by working with emergency management.

He has folks working alongside of him who are traveling down the roads, like Trooper Austin Ellis in the Oklahoma Highway Patrol. He was on a routine patrol but was shot last August—just another day for him. He was able to withstand the bullets and recover, despite a fractured rib. And, by the way—as he would want me to say to you—they got the guy.

Tommie Nicholas works for USCIS, or U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service. Ms. Nicholas reviews and makes case determinations, provides technical and administrative advice, and assigns work based on priorities. She has worked for USCIS for two decades and is one of those folks who is always ready to assist.

She has helped in situations where there is an individual with a pending immigration case who needs to travel to be with an ailing relative overseas or when someone who needs urgent proof of status to work for their family, and she is the one who steps up and goes above and beyond to help to take care of folks' immigration issues and needs.

You see, again, folks at times push back on people dealing with immigration issues, and they forget that there

are great folks who are out there serving their neighbors all the time.

Jim Lyall began his tenure with the Community Service Council in 1980 as a help line program director and became associate director in 1991. He created Oklahoma's first 2-1-1 call center, which allowed Oklahoma to be the first to achieve national accreditation, and helping 2-1-1 to become a statewide service. At the Community Service Council, his leadership in the creation of Tulsa's Heat Emergency Action Plan and the Tulsa Weather Coalition air conditioner loan program has contributed significantly to the health and well-being of many Tulsans. He is another one of those folks serving every single day.

We can't forget our teachers, who are out there constantly helping the kids in the next generation. Ms. Annette Cain teaches second grade at Spring Creek Elementary. On the second day of school, this past school year, she saw one of her students struggling to read. She quickly connected with the reading specialist, the principal, and the parents to discuss how to help this new second grader. Her concern was that he might need to go back to first grade or that he might be behind in second grade and was just going to need some additional help in reading. That little second grader is now caught up and has now had the "most improved reading" award. That is good for him, but it is good for Annette Cain, who saw the problem and who responded to the needs of that child.

It reminds me of stories, day after day after day, of folks like that who are in Elgin, OK, like Don Myers, and all the crew that is there doing special education and so much work to be able to help kids with the greatest amount of need in Elgin; just like in other programs around the State, where those teachers work with the parents, work with other educators, and work with a child to help that child way behind get caught up or to help them in their own development.

I am grateful that this week we get to honor public service because there are millions of public servants doing amazing work to help their neighbors all around the country.

Of all States and of all places, I remind this body often that Oklahomans pause every April 19 and remember a domestic terrorist that parked a truck bomb next to the Federal building and killed 168 people out of his hatred for public servants in the Federal Government. We in Oklahoma remember that public servants get up and go to work every day to be able to serve their neighbors, and we, as individuals, still push back against those who just blindly hate government and blindly hate people who serve in government and serve each other.

We don't blindly hate. We deeply appreciate and are grateful for what they do. We as a State will never forget the 168 lives that were lost 24 years ago of public servants taking care of their neighbors. We are grateful.

If you are a public servant and you hear this, please accept my thank you. Well done. I am proud to be your neighbor.

EX-IM BANK

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, we had three extremely well-qualified people come before this body this week who were nominated to the Board of the Ex-Im Bank, the Export-Import Bank. It is an entity that most individuals across the country don't even know about. They don't even know what the Ex-Im Bank does. But it gets caught up in a lot of politics here.

These extremely well-qualified people were confirmed, and they are now on their way to serve our Nation in that area. I had to vote against them, not because of who they are and their qualifications—they are clearly qualified—but because of my own frustration that this body has not been willing to take on the most basic element of reform of the Ex-Im Bank.

The charter of the Ex-Im Bank requires the Bank “to seek to reach international agreement to reduce government subsidized export financing.” That is in their charter. The problem is, that is not being fulfilled. There has been a push for a while to try to reform the Ex-Im Bank. That push to reform it has failed so far.

My encouragement to the new quorum that is in the leadership role at the Ex-Im Bank is to push to fulfill their requirements to reduce government-subsidized export financing, not expand it, and to take the actions necessary to do that—not only with our Ex-Im structure but working with other countries to reduce theirs. The common phrase is “We have an ex-im bank because other countries have an ex-im bank.” Well, you know what, other countries have a Communist structure—like China. We are not trying to model that either. Should we take on every single subsidy other governments do? Let's try to find a way for them to fulfill their charter.

In the meantime, I have proposed a set of reforms that can be done to the Ex-Im Bank to make it better. Some are fairly obvious.

One of them is reducing taxpayer exposure by prohibiting the Bank from issuing direct loans.

I have also pushed very hard to have this basic statement: a sense of the Senate that the Bank is a lender of last resort, not the first place to go to. That, again, should be a no-brainer for them.

Here is the clearest and easiest reform. Ex-Im Bank brags about how many small businesses use the Ex-Im Bank services, but the next question is not asked. How does Ex-Im Bank define a small business? With chagrin, they will say that their definition of a small business is any business with 1,500 employees or fewer. That is not a small business. So 1,500 employees or fewer is a small business, according to Ex-Im Bank. There are very few companies in America with 1,500 employees.

The most basic thing we can do is have Ex-Im Bank use the same definition the Small Business Administration uses for what a small business is and then put the same requirement on Ex-Im to also use small businesses and engage with them.

We should also prohibit the Bank from providing financing services to foreign and state-owned entities. Why are we financing another government in what they are doing? Why are we actually providing competition for our own companies, as Ex-Im does? They give loans and subsidies to countries and companies that compete against American companies.

All of these ideas are basic reforms.

My push is not to abolish Ex-Im; it is for Ex-Im to fulfill its charter and to do its basic responsibility and to have the most simple reforms that I think are needed.

This is not just talk for us; we have this legislation. We have pushed for this before, and we will continue to push for basic reforms at Ex-Im in the days ahead.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

OPIOID EPIDEMIC

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today again to talk about the drug epidemic that continues to be such a big issue in my home State of Ohio and around our country. I am here now for my 56th floor speech. I am told, on this topic, sometimes talking about the opioid crisis that has gripped my State the way it has so many others in this Chamber but also talking about other issues that relate to the drug epidemic. It is not just about the prescription drugs, the heroin, the fentanyl, and the carfentanil that have impacted so many women and children and families and devastated so many communities; there are also other issues. The one I want to talk about today is what is happening with regard to crystal meth.

Methamphetamine is back with a vengeance, and we need to have a more effective response to it. Congress has done quite a bit in the last several years to push back against this drug epidemic.

New policies have been put in place at the Federal level for the past few years that are promoting better prevention, treatment, and recovery and helping our law enforcement respond with Narcan—that miracle drug that reverses the effects of overdoses—and helping to ensure that we have a prevention message out there that is more effective.

Congress has now spent more than \$3 billion in additional funding—taxpayer dollars—to support treatment and recovery programs, and it has been needed. The Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act has provided a lot of that, and so has the 21st Century Cures Act. That goes directly to the States.

The good news is that these efforts are actually starting to pay off. Drug

overdose deaths are still way too high. In Ohio, we started with a high-water mark, but after 8 years of more people dying every single year, finally, last year, we saw in Ohio and around the country a reduction in overdose deaths. That is great news. We peaked in 2017 at 72,000 Americans losing their lives. It is the No. 1 cause of death in my home State of Ohio and the No. 1 cause of death for all Americans under the age of 50.

The progress has been particularly encouraging in places like Ohio. We saw a 21.4-percent drop in overdose deaths in the first half of last year, 2018. Those are the last numbers we have and the most recent data we have. That was the biggest drop in the Nation, actually, between July of 2017 and June of 2018. So in that 1-year period, according to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, Ohio had the biggest drop in the country. Again, that was partly because Ohio's numbers were so high. We were second in the Nation in overdose deaths, from that data.

Nationally, we are seeing a more promising, if more modest, downturn in overdose deaths. Between September of 2017 and March of 2018, overdose deaths fell from about 72,000 to about 71,000. Overall, the overdose rate dropped in 21 States and nearly a full percentage point nationally. So at least we are seeing some progress finally, after 8 years of increases every year and more and more heartbreak. This is progress.

I think we would have been doing even better, frankly, if we hadn't seen the big influx of fentanyl over the last 3 or 4 years. Again, Congress has passed important legislation, but we are pushing up against more and more fentanyl coming into our communities. That is an incredibly powerful synthetic opioid—50 times more powerful than heroin—inexpensive, and it is coming primarily from China and primarily through the U.S. mail system.

Our pushback on that more recently that is starting to be effective is called the STOP Act. We just passed it in this body last year. What the STOP Act says is that the post office has to start screening packages, particularly from countries like China, from which we know fentanyl is coming in. They haven't done exactly what we asked them to do yet, but they are doing a better job of stopping the poison from coming in from China, which is where the vast majority comes from.

Today, even as we see progress on opioids and as we see somewhat less fentanyl coming in and therefore higher prices for fentanyl on the street, which is important—as we see this progress, we are also seeing something that is very discouraging. What I have been hearing now for over a year from law enforcement, treatment providers, social service providers, and community leaders back home is that there is a resurgence of methamphetamine—pure, powerful crystal meth—coming primarily from Mexico.

I meet regularly with treatment providers and drug abuse task forces all over our State. Recently, I talked to community leaders in Knox County, at the Southeast Healthcare Services in Columbus, at the ADAMHS Board in Adams, Lawrence, and Scioto Counties, the Hamilton County Heroin Coalition, and community leaders and law enforcement in Butler County. Every single meeting ended up the same way: We are finally making progress on opioids. Thanks for your help—because all these communities are taking advantage of the legislation we passed here—but the new scourge is crystal meth. Help us with that.

Often they are saying that this crystal meth is being laced with something else, sometimes fentanyl. So this same deadly fentanyl we talked about earlier is sometimes now being laced with crystal meth, making for a devastating cocktail.

The October 2018 report from Ohio University said that psychostimulants—including methamphetamine—were found in just nine unintentional deaths in 2010. That number rose to 509 in 2017, the most recent data we have. That is an over 5,000-percent increase. Something is happening out there. Again, having finally gotten control of the opioid issue, even the fentanyl, synthetic opioids, which is the latest surge, now we are seeing methamphetamine deaths rising dramatically.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, deaths involving cocaine and psychostimulants, including meth, have also increased nationwide in recent years. Among the more than 70,000 drug overdose deaths in 2017, nearly 23,000—nearly one-third—involved psychostimulants such as meth, cocaine, or both. From 2016 to 2017, deaths rates involving cocaine and psychostimulants like meth each increased by approximately 33 percent. This increase is across all demographic groups, all census regions, and in several States.

A July 2018 report from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services highlights the intertwined nature of rising meth usage rates and the ongoing opioid crisis. They said some meth users initially turned to this drug to manage the heavy crashes that followed prolonged use of heroin and other opioids, and then they became just as addicted to meth as they were addicted to opioids. So that is one reason I think we see this increase in methamphetamines in Ohio—because users are turning to meth to manage the crashes that follow prolonged use of heroin.

Meth is now stronger and cheaper than ever before. Again, it is coming almost exclusively to Ohio from Mexico. The days of home chemists and the one-pot meth labs are actually over. You probably heard about it in your community or other States where these meth labs were a big setup, and they created a huge environmental

problem, as well as the issue of producing meth, which was devastating communities.

Those meth labs are pretty much gone now. In Ohio, there is not a county that tells me there is a meth lab left. That may sound like good news, but it is actually bad news. The meth labs are gone because the meth coming in from Mexico is more powerful and it is cheaper. So why make meth in the basement when you can have crystal meth delivered to your doorstep from Mexico? It is being mass-produced by Mexican drug cartels who are smuggling it into the United States.

According to Dennis Lowe, who is the commander of the Major Crimes Unit in Athens, OH, “[Mexican drug cartels] almost single-handedly eliminated meth labs in the State of Ohio. . . . People are getting better quality product and it’s cheaper to buy from a cartel.”

So it is more powerful, more deadly, and cheaper.

By the way, one Columbus, OH, enforcement officer recently told me that crystal meth on the streets of Columbus is less expensive than marijuana now—another reason we see it increasing.

As I have heard from folks all over Ohio, we are also seeing meth laced with other drugs, including fentanyl, heroin, and cocaine. Many of these cartels splice these drugs into methamphetamine but don’t tell the customers, so users may be consuming dangerous opioids without realizing it. Any street drug can be deadly.

Much of the methamphetamine, as I said, enters from Mexico through the ports of entry. It comes in bulk through the ports of entry. It is often hidden in cars and trucks. Smugglers make it through the screening process, and they sell it to the distribution network.

So we need to do more at the ports of entry to have better screening. According to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection folks, the amount of methamphetamines seized at our ports of entry has soared from 14,000 pounds in 2012 to 56,000 pounds in 2018—a huge increase. In fact, just in the last year alone, we have seen a 38-percent increase in methamphetamines trafficking across the southern border.

According to the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the Northern District of Ohio, the number of crystal meth submissions to the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigations’ lab rose from 2,000 in 2015 to over 12,000 in 2018—in just a 3-year period, a 500-percent increase.

What’s happening with crystal meth is one reason we need more resources to secure our southern border. It is not just my opinion. The experts at Customs and Border Protection tell us they need more physical barriers; they need more border patrol agents; they need more technology; they need more surveillance; they need more cameras; they need more screening to stop this illegal flow of drugs.

I think we are beginning now to make some progress here since we are deploying more sophisticated technology at the ports of entry, and that is smart. But the traffickers are smarter, and they are also learning ways to avoid those ports of entry, to go around them, to cross wherever they can continue this evil and prosperous trade.

A story originating in Galion, OH, last year caught the Nation’s attention. A 5-year-old was out trick-or-treating for Halloween last year, and he was exposed to meth and began suffering from seizures and other symptoms of meth exposure.

Law enforcement checked his Halloween candy, thinking that was the problem, and it was not. It wasn’t laced with the drug as they feared. But then they found the meth. It was in his own home—his own family home. His father eventually was charged with possession of drugs and tampering with evidence. But here is a 5-year-old kid suffering from a meth exposure.

Two weeks ago, I was in Knox County, OH, Central Ohio, where I participated in a roundtable discussion with local elected leaders and law enforcement officials, mental health recovery folks. This board is focused on the crystal meth problem. Why? Because it is overwhelming them. Opioids used to be their No. 1 issue. Now it is crystal meth.

I was told that methamphetamines are now involved in 89 percent of the drug cases in Knox County, and in many cases there is polysubstance abuse or overlap with any combination of meth, heroin, and marijuana.

Last August the Knox County Sheriff’s Department arrested three individuals who were involved in trafficking, distribution of meth, moving from Columbus into Knox County. By the way, what law enforcement tells me about methamphetamines is that they are causing a new state of crimes, somewhat closer to the cocaine crimes that would have been back in the 1990s when cocaine was the primary concern.

Heroin is a drug that does not create the same stimulant effect; it is not a psychostimulant. So the crimes primarily are crimes to pay for the drugs—property crimes—whereas the meth crimes often tend to be crimes of violence because it is a stimulant like cocaine.

So law enforcement tells me they are very concerned. Their jails are being crowded now with meth users who are there for serious crimes. The big issue they are looking at is this: How do you get people through successful recovery?

Here is the other bad news: We do not know much about how to help people in recovery with methamphetamines. We know that with regard to opioids, there are medication-assisted treatments that can be used, and, in general, recovery practices that work for opioids can work for meth—taking people through a therapy process—but there are not the drugs to be able to help you

through it, as there are with opioids. So it is an even tougher problem in some respects.

We talked about the Federal funding that had been awarded to Knox County when I was there, and they are really happy about it. They are getting money through the 21st Century Cures funding that came from here, then went to the State of Ohio, and went down to them. They are getting money from my CARA legislation, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. They are also getting funding from the Drug-Free Communities Act—legislation that I authored when I was in the House of Representatives many years ago, and it is being used for prevention very effectively in some of these counties.

The one thing they said about the funding was that they want to be sure that there is more flexibility, particularly in the 21st Century Cures fund. So it can be used not just for opioids but also for dealing with this meth issue, which is their big problem now.

So my hope is that we will begin to see some flexibility in those funding streams to be able to help places like Knox County.

We need to build a sustainable infrastructure for prevention, treatment, and longer term recovery from all drugs. For these communities, having that flexibility gives them the ability to respond to whatever the latest problem is that is facing their community.

The U.S. Attorney's Office based in Cleveland, OH, which is led by Justin Herdman, has been deeply involved in this effort to combat the spread and distribution of meth. Last August his office indicted eight people in Federal Court for their efforts to create a methamphetamine and cocaine trafficking supply network—a supply chain from Mexico all the way to Ohio.

In connection to these arrests, DEA agents seized more than 144 pounds of meth from a warehouse outside of Cleveland. It is believed to be the largest seizure of methamphetamine in Ohio history. Again, it demonstrates just how serious this threat is and how these criminal organizations pose such a threat to our State and our country.

Back in 2005, Congress passed a bill on meth. It was called the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act. It regulated the over-the-counter sale of certain drugs, like epinephrine, because of their use in the manufacture of methamphetamines. This helped to combat the ability of the meth producers to manufacture cheap methamphetamine from over-the-counter medicines that were easy to get. It dropped the price and reduced its availability. However, Mexican cartels have now again supplanted these domestic labs so that legislation is no longer effective because here we are laden with these cheap, high quality, crystal meth supplies from Mexico.

As the public learns more about the dangers of opioids and works to wean themselves off those drugs, meth-

amphetamine, if left unchecked, is primed now to become the new drug of choice, perpetuating the cycle of abuse. We cannot let that happen.

As we begin to make progress again on the opioid epidemic, which is the worst drug crisis in the history of our country—and remains so—we can't take our eye off the ball. What we are doing is actually helping in the fight against opioids. We need to keep it up. We are actually making progress, finally. We have to keep the pressure on. But my question is, What do we do about the next wave coming? What do we do about the methamphetamine that is coming into my State and your State?

First, we need to continue awareness about the issue of addiction generally. This is not about one drug or just opioids or just meth or just cocaine. It is about the overall addiction—treating addiction like a disease, which it is; providing better treatment so that people can get back on their feet; providing longer term recovery. So raising that awareness generally is important, not just as to opioids but as to addiction, which is really the issue.

Second, we have to do more on our southwest borders to stop the flow of this crystal meth coming in. It is not the ultimate solution because there is enough demand in America for this drug. It will find its way in, but we can stop some of it. We are beginning to do that. At a minimum, we can raise the price on the street, which is one of the problems right now. As I said, it is incredibly inexpensive. As one law enforcement person told me, it is less expensive than marijuana in some cities of America.

Next, we need to do more to support Federal prevention programs that can address this issue—prevention, education, awareness. This is ultimately the most effective way to stop this epidemic from growing. One tool to do that is called the Drug-Free Communities Act. It has established more than 2,000 coalitions now around the country. Let's continue to support those coalitions.

Very little Federal money has gone in compared to the private-sector money, the State and local money, the foundation money, but it leverages some of that other money. We need to continue to support these community foundations.

Next, let's start a new prevention program focused on this meth challenge. One place we could find that funding, by the way, is in the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. We authorized and then actually appropriated \$10 million for a national prevention program. We allowed HSS to set that up. They haven't done it yet. I think it is important that we do it. I would take that \$10 million and multiply it manyfold by using it as leverage to go out to the private sector, to encourage foundations, companies, pharma companies, and others to help in this effort. I believe there is an in-

terest in that. I know there is. Let's do a massive prevention program because that may be, in the end, the most effective way to keep people from getting into the funnel of addiction in the first place.

Next, we need to continue to expand and support these high intensity drug trafficking areas. They really work. I will tell you, in Ohio, when you have Federal resources, combined with State and local resources, when they are coordinated together, focused on this drug issue, they make a lot of sense. They have stopped a lot of the meth distribution, as I said, in Ohio. I talked about what happened in Northeast Ohio. There was the largest meth seizure ever. That was through the HIDTA Program.

Next, we need a more effective treatment for meth. NIDA—the National Institute on Drug Abuse—and the NIH—the National Institutes of Health—are working on answers. But we need new medications so we can assist with quality treatment to help those suffering from addiction get into recovery. This is a major challenge.

I spoke to Scott Gottlieb today, who is a former FDA Commissioner, about this issue, and I have talked to others. We need to do everything we can to support efforts to try to come up with medication that can assist with regard to the treatment for these psychostimulant drugs.

Finally, we have to be sure that the communities have more flexibility to use the Federal funding they are already getting through Cures, through the State Opioid Response grants, to address issues like meth. I am exploring whether legislation is necessary to provide that flexibility, but I believe a lot of it could be provided through the administration of these grants and through the States.

I will continue to ensure that the Federal Government is a better partner for those working on the frontlines on this drug epidemic. Opioids—yes, we need to keep up the fight. We are finally making progress. After 8 years of increases in opioid deaths, finally last year, for the first time in 8 years, we are seeing a reduction of those deaths—the worst drug epidemic in the history of our country. It is not a time for us to pull back. It is time to focus on what is working and do more of it. But, also, we have these new challenges, particularly crystal meth. We need to do a better job of addressing that, as we talked about today.

Working together, I believe we can make a difference. I believe we can turn the tide on addiction in this country.

Thank you.

I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture time on the Park nomination expire at 1:45 p.m., Thursday, May 9. I further ask that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING BURGERS' SMOKEHOUSE

• Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, as a member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, it is my privilege to recognize a family-owned small business that is dedicated to its customers, employees, and community. In honor of the U.S. Small Business Administration's National Small Business Week, it is my pleasure to name Burgers' Smokehouse of California, MO, as the Senate Small Business of the Day.

Burgers' Smokehouse began in 1927 with E.M. Burger, a man who decided to use his mother's recipe to start curing hams for himself. Though this was a time with limited potential for a meat business, Burger sold six hams in his first year and then doubled to 12 hams in his second year. From there, E.M. Burger started employing the help of his family to grow his business to its official launch in 1952 when they opened their first "Ham House" in California, MO. This opening would lead them to become the first country cured meat company in the United States to receive Federal inspection just 4 years later in 1956 which allowed them to ship meat between State borders.

Today, Burgers' Smokehouse is now operated by the third and fourth generation of the Burger family and has become one of the Nation's leading provider of cured meats. Burgers' Smokehouse now employs over 200 people and operates two locations, the original "Ham House" in California, and a newly opened second facility in Springfield, MO. The company distributes over 12 million pounds of products each year and supplies restaurants such as

Bob Evans, Cracker Barrel, and Waffle House. This success was not only due to the quality of their product, but also to the utilization of the latest technology. Burgers' Smokehouse has been recognized in several magazines and newspapers for the cutting-edge innovations used in their production and food safety processes.

In addition to the excellence within Burgers' Smokehouse's walls, the Burger family is intentional about being excellent to those outside of their walls. Employees participate yearly in the Moniteau County Relay for Life. Burgers' Smokehouse has raised over \$100,000 to help fight cancer through this effort. In 2006, Burgers' Smokehouse also sent care packages, which included some of their sandwiches, to U.S. soldiers overseas. Today, they still offer free shipping to anyone who will place an order to a military post. Aside from Burgers' Smokehouse's direct charity, the Burger family also set up a foundation under E.M. Burger's name, the founder of Burgers' Smokehouse. This foundation specializes in gifts to the arts and education and frequently gives grants to the Moniteau County school system.

Burgers' Smokehouse embodies the traits of a true family-owned business. Armed only with his mother's recipe, E.M. Burger sold just six hams in his first year. Ninety-two years later, the third and fourth generations of the Burger family operate his legacy selling over 600,000 hams a year to people all over the country. As a result of the hard work this family and their employees have put in, Burgers' Smokehouse has been the recipient of numerous awards and visited by President Eisenhower, Hank Williams, Jr., and Johnny Carson. It is my distinct pleasure to honor Burgers' Smokehouse as the Senate Small Business of the Day. You make Missouri proud, and I look forward to watching your continued growth and success. •

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13338 OF MAY 11, 2004, WITH RESPECT TO THE BLOCKING OF PROPERTY OF CERTAIN PERSONS AND PROHIBITION OF EXPORTATION AND RE-EXPORTATION OF CERTAIN GOODS TO SYRIA—PM 12

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying

report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1622(d), provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days before the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the actions of the Government of Syria declared in Executive Order 13338 of May 11, 2004—as modified in scope and relied upon for additional steps taken in Executive Order 13399 of April 25, 2006, Executive Order 13460 of February 13, 2008, Executive Order 13572 of April 29, 2011, Executive Order 13573 of May 18, 2011, Executive Order 13582 of August 17, 2011, Executive Order 13606 of April 22, 2012, and Executive Order 13608 of May 1, 2012—is to continue in effect beyond May 11, 2019.

The regime's brutal war on the Syrian people, who have been calling for freedom and a representative government, not only endangers the Syrian people themselves, but also generates instability throughout the region. The Syrian regime's actions and policies, including pursuing and using chemical weapons, supporting terrorist organizations, and obstructing the Lebanese government's ability to function effectively continue to foster the rise of extremism and sectarianism and pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue in effect the national emergency declared with respect to this threat and to maintain in force the sanctions to address this national emergency.

In addition, the United States condemns the Assad regime's use of brutal violence and human rights abuses and calls on the Assad regime to stop its violent war, uphold existing ceasefires, enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and negotiate a political transition in Syria that will forge a credible path to a future of greater freedom, democracy, opportunity, and justice. The United States will consider changes in the composition, policies, and actions of the Government of Syria in determining whether to continue or terminate this national emergency in the future.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, May 8, 2019.

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13667 OF MAY 12, 2014, WITH RESPECT TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC—PM 13

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days before the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13667 of May 12, 2014, with respect to the Central African Republic is to continue in effect beyond May 12, 2019.

The situation in and in relation to the Central African Republic, which has been marked by a breakdown of law and order, intersectorian tension, widespread violence and atrocities, and the pervasive, often forced recruitment and use of child soldiers, threatens the peace, security, or stability of the Central African Republic and the neighboring states, and continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. Therefore, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13667 with respect to the Central African Republic.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, May 8, 2019.

NOTIFICATION OF INTENT TO DESIGNATE BRAZIL AS A MAJOR NON-NATO ALLY—PM 14

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 517 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (22 U.S.C. 2321k), I am providing notice of my intent to designate Brazil as a Major Non-NATO Ally.

I am making this designation in recognition of the Government of Brazil's recent commitments to increase defense cooperation with the United States, and in recognition of our own national interest in deepening our defense coordination with Brazil.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, May 8, 2019.

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE ISSUANCE OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER WITH RESPECT TO IRAN THAT TAKES ADDITIONAL STEPS WITH RESPECT TO THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 12957 OF MARCH 15, 1995—PM 15

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the "order") with respect to Iran that takes additional steps with respect to the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12957 of March 15, 1995, and to supplement the authorities provided in the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act of 2012 (subtitle D of title XII of Public Law 112-239).

The order takes steps to deny Iran revenue, including revenue derived from the export of products from Iran's iron, steel, aluminum, and copper sectors, that may be used to provide funding and support for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorist groups and networks, campaigns of regional aggression, and military expansion.

The order blocks the property and interests in property of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

- to be operating in the iron, steel, aluminum, or copper sector of Iran, or to be a person that owns, controls, or operates an entity that is part of the iron, steel, aluminum, or copper sector of Iran;

- to have knowingly engaged, on or after the date of the order, in a significant transaction for the sale, supply, or transfer to Iran of significant goods or services used in connection with the iron, steel, aluminum, or copper sectors of Iran;

- to have knowingly engaged, on or after the date of the order, in a significant transaction for the purchase, acquisition, sale, transport, or marketing of iron, iron products, aluminum, aluminum products, steel, steel products, copper, or copper products from Iran;

- to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order;

- to be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

The order also authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation

with the Secretary of State, to impose correspondent and payable-through account-related sanctions on a foreign financial institution upon determining the foreign financial institution has, on or after the date of the order, knowingly conducted or facilitated a significant financial transaction:

- for the sale, supply, or transfer to Iran of significant goods or services used in connection with the iron, steel, aluminum, or copper sectors of Iran;

- for the purchase, acquisition, sale, transport, or marketing of iron, iron products, aluminum, aluminum products, steel, steel products, copper, or copper products from Iran; or

- for or on behalf of any persons whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions, including adopting rules and regulations, to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to implement the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the order I have issued.

DONALD J. TRUMP.
THE WHITE HOUSE, May 8, 2019.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:16 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1704. An act to foster commercial relations with foreign countries and support United States economic and business interests abroad in the conduct of foreign policy, and for other purposes.

H.R. 2002. An act to foster security in Taiwan, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1704. An act to foster commercial relations with foreign countries and support United States economic and business interests abroad in the conduct of foreign policy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.R. 2002. An act to foster security in Taiwan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-1237. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Cyflumetofen; Pesticide Tolerances" (FRL No. 9990-60-OCSPP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2019; to the

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-1238. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Pesticides; Technical Amendment to Data Requirements for Antimicrobial Pesticides" (FRL No. 9990-60-OCSPP) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2019; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-1239. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to an appropriation request in emergency funding to respond to the humanitarian and security crisis at the United States southern border; to the Committee on Appropriations.

EC-1240. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Sustainment), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the ongoing use of open burn pits and the feasibility of phasing out the use of open burn pits by using technology incinerators; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-1241. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Sustainment), transmitting, pursuant to law, a notice of additional time required to implement a small business strategy for the Department of Defense; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-1242. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Sustainment), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Report to Congress: Impacts from Relocating Steam Turbine Production"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-1243. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Sudan that was declared in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1244. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the export to the People's Republic of China of items not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-1245. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Air Plan Approval; Wisconsin; Non-attainment New Source Review Requirements for the 2008 8-Hour Ozone Standard" (FRL No. 9993-25-Region 5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1246. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Colorado; Revisions to Regulation Number 3" (FRL No. 9992-97-Region 8) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1247. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Maryland; Reasonably Available Control Technology for Cement Kilns, Revisions to Portland Ce-

ment Manufacturing Plant and Natural Gas Compression Station Regulations, and Removal of Nitrogen Oxides Reduction and Trading Programs Replaced by Other Programs and Regulations; Correction" (FRL No. 9993-31-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1248. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Pennsylvania; Regulatory Amendments Addressing Reasonably Available Control Technology Requirements under the 1997 and 2008 8-hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards" (FRL No. 9993-36-Region 3) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1249. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Environmental Protection Agency Acquisition Regulation (EPAAR) Clause Update for Submission of Invoices" (FRL No. 9992-99-OMS) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1250. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan; National Priorities List: Partial Deletion of the Beckman Instruments Superfund Site" (FRL No. 9993-34-Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 3, 2019; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-1251. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel of the National Science Foundation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Conservation of Antarctic Animals and Plants" (RIN3145-AA59) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 6, 2019; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-1252. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting proposed legislation relative to the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2020; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-1253. A communication from the Chief of the Regulatory Coordination Division, Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Exercise of Time-Limited Authority to Increase the Fiscal Year 2019 Numerical Limitation for the H-2B Temporary Non-agricultural Worker Program" (RIN1615-AC38) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on May 7, 2019; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 1357. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish direct care registered nurse-to-patient staffing ratio requirements in hospitals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DAINES:

S. 1358. A bill to amend title 13, United States Code, to require that any questionnaire used in determining the decennial census of population shall contain an option for respondents to indicate citizenship status; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. SMITH (for herself, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. Kaine, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 1359. A bill to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to establish a market-oriented standard for clean electric energy generation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. LANKFORD):

S. 1360. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to ensure that the final pay and certificate of discharge or release for a reserve member of the Armed Forces is ready upon discharge or release of that member from active status; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. KING):

S. 1361. A bill to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 respecting the scoring of preventive health savings; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1362. A bill to make demonstration grants to eligible local educational agencies or consortia of eligible local educational agencies for the purpose of increasing the numbers of school nurses in public elementary schools and secondary schools; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. PORTMAN, and Ms. HARRIS):

S. 1363. A bill to authorize an AI Center of Excellence within the General Services Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. JONES):

S. 1364. A bill to establish an Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment Program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. UDALL, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN):

S. 1365. A bill to provide emergency assistance to States, territories, Tribal nations, and local areas affected by the opioid epidemic and to make financial assistance available to States, territories, Tribal nations, local areas, and public or private non-profit entities to provide for the development, organization, coordination, and operation of more effective and cost efficient systems for the delivery of essential services to individuals with substance use disorder and their families; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HASSAN, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 1366. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to require the Attorney General to make procurement quotas for opioid analgesics publicly available, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 1367. A bill to designate Union Station in Washington, DC, as "Harry S. Truman Union Station"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. BURR:

S. 1368. A bill to provide for the recognition of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CASSIDY, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 1369. A bill to impose sanctions on individuals who are complicit in human rights abuses committed against nationals of Vietnam or their family members, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. JONES, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. WARNER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. KING, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BURR, Mr. TESTER, Mr. DAINES, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. COTTON, Mr. BROWN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. BENNET, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. CASEY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 1370. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain military survivor benefits as earned income for purposes of the kiddie tax; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 1371. A bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to conduct a study on the effects of oxybenzone and octinoxate on the environment and public health, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CARPER, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BURR, Mr. PETERS, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 1372. A bill to encourage Federal agencies to expeditiously enter into or amend cooperative agreements with States for removal and remedial actions to address PFAS contamination in drinking, surface, and ground water and land surface and subsurface strata, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 1373. A bill to require the United States Postal Service to enter into an agreement with U.S. Customs and Border Protection to train employees of the Postal Service to identify illicit packages; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. MCSALLY (for herself and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 1374. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the waiting periods for disability insurance benefits and Medicare coverage for individuals with metastatic breast cancer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MERKLEY:

S. 1375. A bill to require the Commissioner of Food and Drugs to develop standards for a "Reef Safe" label for sunscreen; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 1376. A bill to amend parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act to elimi-

nate barriers to providing child welfare services for children and youth in need, to provide additional resources to implement programmatic changes necessary to meet the requirements of the Family First Prevention Services Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. HARRIS:

S. 1377. A bill to incentivize States and localities to improve access to justice, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. LEE, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. ENZI, Mr. CRAMER, and Mr. PAUL):

S. 1378. A bill to repeal the multi-State plan program; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BURR (for himself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. ALEXANDER, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 1379. A bill to reauthorize certain programs under the Public Health Service Act and the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to public health security and all-hazards preparedness and response, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 1380. A bill to amend the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure to remind prosecutors of their obligations under Supreme Court case law; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CARPER, Ms. ERNST, and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. Res. 194. A resolution designating July 30, 2019, as "National Whistleblower Appreciation Day"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. SASSE, and Mr. INHOFE):

S. Res. 195. A resolution opposing the lifting of sanctions imposed with respect to Iran without addressing Iran's nuclear program, ballistic missile development, support for terrorism, and other destabilizing activities; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. PERDUE (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. Res. 196. A resolution recognizing the American Peanut Shellers Association for a century of effective leadership in the peanut industry and the beneficial work of the peanut industry in the United States and the State of Georgia; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. ROSEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUNT, Ms. HASSAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. ERNST, Mr. COONS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. CASEY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. KAINE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. KING, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. JONES, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. Res. 197. A resolution recognizing the roles and contributions of the teachers of the United States in building and enhancing the

civic, cultural, and economic well-being of the United States; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 27

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 27, a bill to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 to transfer certain funds to the 1974 United Mine Workers of America Pension Plan, and for other purposes.

S. 151

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) were added as cosponsors of S. 151, a bill to deter criminal robocall violations and improve enforcement of section 227(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, and for other purposes.

S. 172

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 172, a bill to delay the reimposition of the annual fee on health insurance providers until after 2021.

S. 178

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 178, a bill to condemn gross human rights violations of ethnic Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, and calling for an end to arbitrary detention, torture, and harassment of these communities inside and outside China.

S. 289

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 289, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to support rural residency training funding that is equitable for all States, and for other purposes.

S. 433

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 433, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve home health payment reforms under the Medicare program.

S. 500

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 500, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish, fund, and provide for the use of amounts in a National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund to address the maintenance backlog of the National Park Service, and for other purposes.

S. 566

At the request of Mr. JONES, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor

of S. 566, a bill to amend the Securities and Exchange Act of 1934 to expand access to capital for rural-area small businesses, and for other purposes.

S. 679

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) were added as cosponsors of S. 679, a bill to exempt from the calculation of monthly income certain benefit paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

S. 684

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 684, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high-cost employer-sponsored health coverage.

S. 743

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 743, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the soldiers of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), commonly known as "Merrill's Marauders", in recognition of their bravery and outstanding service in the jungles of Burma during World War II.

S. 803

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 803, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restore incentives for investments in qualified improvement property.

S. 846

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. HAWLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 846, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to limit certain rolling stock procurements, and for other purposes.

S. 851

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 851, a bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to issue an occupational safety and health standard that requires covered employers within the health care and social service industries to develop and implement a comprehensive workplace violence prevention plan, and for other purposes.

S. 852

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) were added as cosponsors of S. 852, a bill to provide for the consideration of a definition of anti-Semitism

for the enforcement of Federal anti-discrimination laws concerning education programs or activities.

S. 901

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 901, a bill to amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to support individuals with younger onset Alzheimer's disease.

S. 951

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 951, a bill to promote registered apprenticeships, including registered apprenticeships within in-demand industry sectors, through the support of workforce intermediaries, and for other purposes.

S. 997

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 997, a bill to recognize and honor the service of individuals who served in the United States Cadet Nurse Corps during World War II, and for other purposes.

S. 998

At the request of Mr. HAWLEY, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 998, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to expand support for police officer family services, stress reduction, and suicide prevention, and for other purposes.

S. 1034

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1034, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program, and for other purposes.

S. 1046

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1046, a bill to establish the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth, and for other purposes.

S. 1195

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1195, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumption relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 1201

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1201, a bill to amend the fossil energy research and development provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to enhance fossil fuel technology, and for other purposes.

S. 1208

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 1208, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 with respect to payments to certain public safety officers who have become permanently and totally disabled as a result of personal injuries sustained in the line of duty, and for other purposes.

S. 1231

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1231, a bill to reauthorize the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program.

S. 1246

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1246, a bill to extend the protections of the Fair Housing Act to persons suffering discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, and for other purposes.

S. 1306

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1306, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act, the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947, and the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, and for other purposes.

S. 1335

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1335, a bill to eliminate the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

S. 1337

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1337, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to establish an Office of Correctional Education, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 98

At the request of Mrs. BLACKBURN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 98, a resolution establishing the Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program for the placement in offices of Senators of children, spouses, and siblings of members of the Armed Forces who are hostile casualties or who have died from a training-related injury.

S. RES. 120

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 120, a resolution opposing efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel and the Global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement targeting Israel.

S. RES. 184

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 184, a resolution condemning the Easter Sunday terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka, offering sincere condolences to the victims, to their families and friends, and to the people and nation of Sri Lanka, and expressing solidarity and support for Sri Lanka.

S. RES. 188

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 188, a resolution encouraging a swift transfer of power by the military to a civilian-led political authority in the Republic of the Sudan, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 189

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 189, a resolution condemning all forms of antisemitism.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. SMITH (for herself, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. KAINE, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 1359. A bill to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to establish a market-oriented standard for clean electric energy generation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, climate change is the existential challenge of our time. I know this because this is what the science says. I know this because I have seen the impacts of climate change in my State. I know this because it is what our children who will live with the consequences of a changing climate tell us. In a recent poll, half of Americans age 18 to 29 describe climate change as a "crisis that demands urgent action."

Today I rise to discuss how the clean energy revolution can be the way we fight climate change and the way we create jobs and opportunity. Colleagues, in this global challenge, the United States can lead or we can follow. I want us to lead.

This morning, as a Senator from an agricultural and high-tech State from the Upper Midwest, I have joined with Representative BEN RAY LUJÁN, who represents the great State of New Mexico, a State with significant oil and gas resources, to introduce the Clean Energy Standard Act of 2019. Our legislation would dramatically expand clean electricity and put the United States on a path to net zero greenhouse gas emissions from the electric sector by the middle of the century, including a nearly 80-percent reduction in emissions by 2035 compared to 2005.

Not so long ago, the United States was a global leader in tackling climate change. President Obama took strong action to remove carbon emissions from cars. He advanced the Clean Power Plan to significantly reduce emissions in the electric sector, and he provided the essential leadership that led to adoption of the international Paris climate agreement, which commits the countries of the world to collectively hold global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius.

Unfortunately, our current President has moved unilaterally to undo these actions, as if we can bury our heads in the sand and ignore the reality that a warming climate threatens our health, it threatens our financial stability, and it threatens our very existence. I regret to say it, but for the most part, the Republican-led Congress has gone along with President Trump as he has ceded U.S. leadership on climate and clean energy to our competitors.

The result of this? Our global competitors are happy to dominate in this field. This is, I think, quite interesting. China has more than twice as much wind power as the United States, and in 2018, China beat the United States on new wind installations by more than 3 to 1. Half of all new solar installations in the world last year happened in China. Here at home, President Trump's policies caused the solar energy industry to shed 20,000 jobs as the United States lags in fourth place on installed solar energy.

Fortunately, while Washington wavers, there is a groundswell of support for the clean energy revolution at the local level. When President Trump moved against the Paris climate agreement, Americans responded with the "We Are Still In" campaign. Churches, Tribes, mayors, county executives, and campus leaders led the way. States followed and took action. Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives pledged and passed legislation to renew our commitment to the Paris Agreement.

There are now over 100 cities around the country which have committed to clean or renewable energy. Four States and the District of Columbia have policies that will get them to net zero emissions by mid-century. Several more are moving in that direction. In my home State, Minnesota's Governor, Tim Walz, has a plan for 100 percent carbon-free electricity by 2050. That bill passed the Minnesota House by a 74-to-59 vote. Minnesota Senate, it is now your turn. To my colleagues in the Senate, it is our turn as well.

I believe the best ideas come from people working at the local level to solve problems, and I also think the best ideas that can get done are those that bring people together across regional differences, political ideology, and their own life experiences. That is how our bill, the Clean Energy Standard Act of 2019, came to be. It builds on what is already working at the local level.

As a clean energy standard, it has a bipartisan history. Back when Repub-

licans and Democrats were working together on bills to reduce carbon pollution—all the way back in 2009 through 2012—clean energy standard bills like this one had both Democratic and Republican cosponsors. This bill today is supported by labor groups, by environmental groups, and by utilities—an unlikely but strong coalition in these days of divisive politics.

The basics of this plan are simple. First, let's start where electric utilities are and then improve from there. We know many electric utilities are shifting to renewables and clean energy because it is the most cost-competitive thing for them to do and because it is what their customers want, but we also know that each utility is going to start from a different place in terms of the amount of clean energy it already sells.

Let's start there. Our bill recognizes these regional differences and then asks each utility to improve from where they are. One size does not fit all. On the one hand, States like Idaho and Washington are blessed with abundant hydropower and already produce over 80 percent of their electricity from carbon-free sources. On the other hand, four of our United States get less than 10 percent of their electricity from carbon-free generation. Our bill asks each utility to start from where they are and improve from there.

Utilities that start with a low amount of clean energy are asked to grow quickly, but they slow down as they reach very high levels of net zero emission electricity. The plan recognizes also that rural co-ops and municipal utilities face unique challenges, and we accommodate that.

The second thing about this plan is this: Let's be ambitious. Science tells us that we need to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by the second half of this century if we are to avoid the worst consequences of climate change. We desperately need some can-do American spirit and ingenuity here, not nay-saying.

This bill is ambitious. It would result in expected electric sector emission reductions of nearly 80 percent by 2035 compared to 2005 benchmarks. If the cost curve bends faster and the clean energy transition turns out to be even cheaper, reductions will happen even faster.

Third, let's be open to all solutions for a clean energy future. Addressing the challenges of climate change isn't easy, and there is no one solution. We need to be open to all ideas and all approaches so long as they actually reduce carbon emissions. If we want an electric system that is not only zero emissions but also reliable, resilient, and affordable, we can't afford to rule out any technologies in advance.

None of us knows in 2019 what is going to be the best way to run a reliable, affordable net zero emissions electric system in 2050. What we do know is that we need to create strong

clean energy incentives that the electricity market will understand and respond to and then allow all technologies to compete. That is what this bill does.

Here is what that might look like. Here is what it could look like. Most scientific models say that in a net zero emission electric grid, renewable sources like wind and solar will deliver the bulk of the electricity we need, but we also know that a reliable grid needs energy sources that can be turned up or down when we need them. This means resilient, reliable electric grids that will be built on a combination of hydropower, nuclear power, long-term energy storage, and fossil fuels, if they are deployed with carbon capture.

What will be the proportion of these energy sources in 2050? We can't know that today, but what we do know, based on one leading model, is an approach like the one in our bill that is open to all clean sources of electricity will be up to trillions of dollars cheaper than an approach that relies on handpicking technological winners and losers. Colleagues, clean, reliable, and affordable energy is important to my constituents in Minnesota, and I bet it is important to your constituents as well.

Fighting climate change is a big challenge that requires a lot of good ideas. The Clean Energy Standard Act of 2019, which I introduced today, will get the electric power sector to net zero carbon emissions, but it doesn't do everything we need to do to fight climate change.

This bill is only one of the steps that we need to take to move our country and our world to net zero greenhouse gas emissions in a way that is fair and just and economical, but it is an important piece.

In the electric sector, we already know a lot about how to make progress to lower carbon emissions. Thanks to innovation and good policies at the State level, emissions from electricity production have declined substantially just in the last decade.

Now we need to keep that progress going and going faster. We need to continue and accelerate progress and expand the use of clean electricity into other sectors.

Think about this. A clean electric grid can provide the energy to reduce carbon emissions in transportation, in buildings, and in other parts of our economy. Electric vehicles can contribute to reduce carbon emissions when we have a clean energy electric sector. Office buildings and homes can contribute to reduce carbon emissions when we have a clean electric sector. That is what progress can look like.

I am grateful that a few of my fellow Republicans in Congress are moving beyond the President's head-in-the-sand denial of climate change. These colleagues—and I hope more of them—are looking for ways to spur innovation in clean energy by providing new funding for clean energy research.

This is all well and good, but Federal funding for clean energy research will not work all on its own. What drives adoption and dispersion of innovation is a strong market signal that low carbon sources of electricity will be valued by the market, and that will be happening predictably as big utilities make important capital investments. Research money provides a really important push to get innovation started in the lab, but for innovation to move from technology to be adopted at a scale and pace that we need, we must be sending a strong, clear signal from the market that low-carbon sources of electricity are going to be valued.

The Clean Energy Standard Act of 2019 does this. It is a crucial complement to Manhattan Project efforts to spur technology innovation. These two are complements but not alternatives. Research without market incentives will not get us where we need to go.

Colleagues, climate change is real, and we need bold action to fight it. If we do—when we do—the United States can be the clean energy leader. This will be good for jobs. It will be good for our health, and it will be necessary for the survival of our planet.

We can lead or we can follow. I believe we need to lead. This is what our bill seeks to do by putting the United States in the forefront for reaching net zero carbon emissions in the electric sector. This is an environmental imperative. It is an economic imperative, and it is a jobs imperative. I don't care whether you come from a State that gets 80 percent of its power from clean energy or whether you get 10 percent.

This is why our plan has the endorsement of the Union of Concerned Scientists, the Clean Air Task Force, and Fresh Energy in Minnesota. Our plan is supported by the Utility Workers of America and United Steelworkers. Bills that are acceptable to labor, the environmental movement, and forward-thinking utilities are rare. Yet this is what we really need if we are going to build a winning coalition to address climate change.

We Democrats understand that the climate crisis requires bold action, and we understand that we need many ideas and many solutions. I offer one today.

I challenge—I urge—my Republican colleagues to do the same and to join us. Join with us and help us find solutions to a crisis that will shape irrevocably the world our children and our grandchildren will be living in.

Science tells us that the challenge is great, but it also shows us solutions that can cut net carbon emissions to zero, lower energy costs, and expand jobs and opportunity. That is the future I want for my children and my grandchildren yet to be born. Let's get to work. We don't have any time to waste.

I thank Representative LUJÁN for partnering with me on this bill. I thank my colleagues Senators HEIN-

RICH, KAINE, WHITEHOUSE, and SCHATZ for cosponsoring this legislation. I also thank Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, longtime chair of the Senate Energy Committee, who first worked in a bipartisan way on a clean energy standard bill that was a template for our effort today.

I thank also the scientists and economists who have provided thoughtful analysis as we developed this bill—most prominently, Resources for the Future and President Obama's Secretary of Energy, Ernie Moniz. I am grateful for their support and eager to begin the push to get our policies moved forward.

I yield the floor.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 194—DESIGNATING JULY 30, 2019, AS “NATIONAL WHISTLEBLOWER APPRECIATION DAY”

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CARPER, Ms. ERNST, and Mr. JOHNSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 194

Whereas, in 1777, before the passage of the Bill of Rights, 10 sailors and Marines blew the whistle on fraud and misconduct that was harmful to the United States;

Whereas the Founding Fathers unanimously supported the whistleblowers in words and deeds, including by releasing government records and providing monetary assistance for the reasonable legal expenses necessary to prevent retaliation against the whistleblowers;

Whereas, on July 30, 1778, in demonstration of their full support for whistleblowers, the members of the Continental Congress unanimously passed the first whistleblower legislation in the United States that read: “Resolved, That it is the duty of all persons in the service of the United States, as well as all other the inhabitants thereof, to give the earliest information to Congress or other proper authority of any misconduct, frauds or misdemeanors committed by any officers or persons in the service of these states, which may come to their knowledge” (legislation of July 30, 1778, reprinted in *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al. (Washington, DC, 1904-37), 11:732);

Whereas whistleblowers risk their careers, jobs, and reputations by reporting waste, fraud, and abuse to the proper authorities;

Whereas, in providing the proper authorities with lawful disclosures, whistleblowers save the taxpayers of the United States billions of dollars each year and serve the public interest by ensuring that the United States remains an ethical and safe place; and

Whereas it is the public policy of the United States to encourage, in accordance with Federal law (including the Constitution of the United States, rules, and regulations) and consistent with the protection of classified information (including sources and methods of detection of classified information), honest and good faith reporting of misconduct, fraud, misdemeanors, and other crimes to the appropriate authority at the earliest time possible: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates July 30, 2019, as “National Whistleblower Appreciation Day”; and

(2) ensures that the Federal Government implements the intent of the Founding Fathers, as reflected in the legislation passed on July 30, 1778 (relating to whistleblowers), by encouraging each executive agency to recognize National Whistleblower Appreciation Day by—

(A) informing employees, contractors working on behalf of the taxpayers of the United States, and members of the public about the legal right of a United States citizen to “blow the whistle” to the appropriate authority by honest and good faith reporting of misconduct, fraud, misdemeanors, or other crimes; and

(B) acknowledging the contributions of whistleblowers to combating waste, fraud, abuse, and violations of laws and regulations of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 195—OPPOSING THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS IMPOSED WITH RESPECT TO IRAN WITHOUT ADDRESSING IRAN’S NUCLEAR PROGRAM, BALLISTIC MISSILE DEVELOPMENT, SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM, AND OTHER DESTABILIZING ACTIVITIES

Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. HAWLEY, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. SASSE, and Mr. INHOFE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 195

Whereas the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), an agreement that was finalized by the administration of President Obama and the respective governments of the United Kingdom, Germany, France, the People’s Republic of China, and the Russian Federation (P5+1) in July 2015, provided Iran permanent sanctions relief and access to more than \$100,000,000,000 in return for temporary restrictive measures on Iran’s nuclear program;

Whereas, under the JCPOA, restrictions on the number and types of centrifuges that Iran may manufacture, the number and types of enrichment facilities that Iran may construct, and the amount and level of enriched uranium and heavy water that Iran may stockpile, will expire;

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2231, unanimously adopted on July 20, 2015, contained an 8-year nonbinding restriction on Iranian nuclear-capable ballistic missile activities and a 5-year ban on conventional arms transfers to Iran;

Whereas neither the JCPOA nor UNSCR 2231 adequately addressed the threat emanating from Iran’s ballistic missile program or support for terrorism, and the sunset provisions applied to prohibitions in UNSCR 2231 inadvertently legitimized that program and support;

Whereas, based on the shortcomings of the JCPOA and UNSCR 2231, bipartisan majorities in both the Senate and the House of Representatives opposed the JCPOA and the sanctions relief for Iran contained in the agreement;

Whereas the sanctions relief contained in the JCPOA provided resources necessary for Iran to continue developing ballistic missiles and supporting terrorism;

Whereas the administration of President Trump has designated Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a foreign terrorist organization under section 219(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1189(a)) and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist group under Executive Order 13224 (50 U.S.C. 1701 note); relating to blocking property and prohibiting transactions with persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism;

Whereas, on May 21, 2018, Secretary of State Pompeo outlined steps that the Iranian government must take to normalize relations with the United States, to include—

(1) providing the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) a full account of the prior military dimensions of its nuclear program and permanently and verifiably abandoning such work;

(2) ceasing all enrichment and vowing never to pursue plutonium reprocessing;

(3) providing the IAEA with access to all sites throughout the entire country;

(4) ending its development and proliferation of ballistic missiles;

(5) releasing all United States citizens currently held hostage, as well as citizens of United States partners and allies;

(6) ending support for terrorist groups, including Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad;

(7) respecting the sovereignty of Iraq by demobilizing Iranian-controlled Shia militias in the country;

(8) ending its military support for the Houthi militia in Yemen;

(9) withdrawing all forces under Iranian command in Syria;

(10) ending support for the Taliban in Afghanistan and for senior al Qaeda leaders around the region;

(11) ending the IRGC’s support for terrorists and militant partners around the world; and

(12) halting its threatening behavior against its neighbors;

Whereas President Trump announced the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA on May 8, 2018, and, since then, has gradually reimposed sanctions that were suspended by the Obama administration under the JCPOA;

Whereas the JCPOA defined the sanctions that the Obama administration suspended under the JCPOA as “nuclear-related”, but “nuclear-related” is not a term recognized under existing statutory sanctions related to Iran;

Whereas the Obama administration agreed to define the most significant bilateral sanctions imposed by the United States on Iran as “nuclear-related”, waive the application of those sanctions under the JCPOA, and commit the executive branch to attempt to work with Congress and State and local governments in the United States to repeal the provisions of law providing for those sanctions upon the expiration of the JCPOA;

Whereas, pursuant to the terms of the JCPOA, sanctions were lifted on Iranian financial institutions, cargo vessels, aircraft, and charities, which were not linked to Iran’s nuclear program but were sanctioned for illicit conduct;

Whereas, pursuant to section 401(a) of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8551(a)), in order to terminate sanctions against the Central Bank of Iran and other financial institutions of Iran, the President is required to certify that “the Government of Iran has ceased providing support for acts of international terrorism and no longer satisfies the requirements for designation as a state sponsor of terrorism”, and that “Iran has ceased the pursuit, acquisition, and development of, and verifiably dismantled its,

nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and ballistic missiles and ballistic missile launch technology”;

Whereas, pursuant to section 8 of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note), in order to terminate sanctions imposed with respect to the energy sector of Iran, the President is required to certify “that Iran—

“(1) has ceased its efforts to design, develop, manufacture, or acquire—

“(A) a nuclear explosive device or related materials and technology;

“(B) chemical and biological weapons; and

“(C) ballistic missiles and ballistic missile launch technology;

“(2) has been removed from the list of countries the governments of which have been determined . . . to have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism; and

“(3) poses no significant threat to United States national security, interests, or allies.”; and

Whereas the concept of “nuclear-related” sanctions does not exist in statute and existing statutes likely require a treaty to terminate such sanctions: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms that it is the policy of the United States not to allow Iran to develop or otherwise acquire a nuclear weapons capability;

(2) resolves that the lifting or termination of sanctions with respect to Iran must take place only as provided for under section 401(a) of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (22 U.S.C. 8551(a)) and section 8 of the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-172; 50 U.S.C. 1701 note); and

(3) rejects the reapplication of sanctions relief provided for in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

SENATE RESOLUTION 196—RECOGNIZING THE AMERICAN PEANUT SHELLERS ASSOCIATION FOR A CENTURY OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE PEANUT INDUSTRY AND THE BENEFICIAL WORK OF THE PEANUT INDUSTRY IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Mr. PERDUE (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 196

Whereas, in 1917 and 1918, commercial peanut shellers and crushers in Georgia, Alabama, and Florida recognized the need for an organization to promote the peanut industry in the southeastern United States;

Whereas, to address that need, the Southeastern Peanut Association was chartered on April 5, 1919, with a mission to promote the domestic peanut industry;

Whereas the Southeastern Peanut Association, now known as the American Peanut Shellers Association—

(1) is the oldest organized group in the United States dedicated to the promotion of the domestic peanut industry; and

(2) has been at the forefront of leadership in the peanut industry in the United States for more than a century, promoting that industry in the United States and throughout the world;

Whereas, in furtherance of the mission to promote the domestic peanut industry, the Southeastern Peanut Association began to cosponsor the USA Peanut Congress, the

largest meeting of all elements of the peanut industry in the United States;

Whereas, in 1986, the Southeastern Peanut Association completed a new headquarters office in Albany, Georgia, after outgrowing a previous office;

Whereas, in 1993, the name of the Southeastern Peanut Association was changed to the American Peanut Shellers Association, as the mission of the association had expanded throughout the United States;

Whereas, in 1996, the American Peanut Shellers Association formed The Peanut Institute to promote the nutritional benefits of peanuts;

Whereas The Peanut Institute has promoted nutritional research through outside universities and other organizations, and that research has verified the outstanding nutritional benefits of peanuts;

Whereas, on recognizing those nutritional benefits, the Food and Drug Administration, pursuant to the leadership of The Peanut Institute, granted nuts a qualified health claim;

Whereas the members, committees, and board of the American Peanut Shellers Association work collectively to meet the adopted annual goals of the American Peanut Shellers Association; and

Whereas, through that collective work, the American Peanut Shellers Association continues to be an effective voice for the promotion of—

(1) the peanut industry; and

(2) the nutritional benefits of peanuts:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes—

(1) the American Peanut Shellers Association for a century of effective leadership in the peanut industry; and

(2) the beneficial work of the peanut industry in—

(A) the United States; and

(B) the State of Georgia.

SENATE RESOLUTION 197—RECOGNIZING THE ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE TEACHERS OF THE UNITED STATES IN BUILDING AND ENHANCING THE CIVIC, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. BROWN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. ROSEN, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BLUNT, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CAPITO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. ERNST, Mr. COONS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. CASEY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BENNET, Mr. KAINE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. KING, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. JONES, and Ms. HIRONO) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 197

Whereas education and knowledge are the foundation of the current and future strength of the United States;

Whereas teachers and other education staff have earned and deserve the respect of their students and communities for the selfless dedication of the teachers and staff to community service and the futures of the children of the United States;

Whereas the purposes of National Teacher Appreciation Week, celebrated from May 6, 2019, through May 10, 2019, are—

(1) to raise public awareness of the unquantifiable contributions of teachers; and

(2) to promote greater respect and understanding for the teaching profession; and

Whereas students, schools, communities, and a number of organizations representing educators are hosting teacher appreciation events in recognition of National Teacher Appreciation Week: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) thanks the teachers of the United States; and

(2) promotes the profession of teaching by encouraging students, parents, school administrators, and public officials to participate in teacher appreciation events during National Teacher Appreciation Week.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have 8 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "New entrants in the National Airspace."

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "Oversight on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' civil work program."

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "Examining MACRA implementation."

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "The Older American Act."

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

The Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION

The Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration of the Com-

mittee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Abigail Regitsky, a fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of this week.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Sydney Fincher, a member of my staff, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 116th Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNIZING THE AMERICAN PEANUT SHELLERS ASSOCIATION

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 196, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 196) recognizing the American Peanut Shellers Association for a century of effective leadership in the peanut industry and the beneficial work of the peanut industry in the United States and the State of Georgia.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 196) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RECOGNIZING THE ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE TEACHERS OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 197, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 197) recognizing the roles and contributions of the teachers of the United States in building and enhancing the civic, cultural, and economic well-being of the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution

be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 197) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2019

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, May 9; further, that following the prayer and

pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Park nomination under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 9, 2019, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate May 8, 2019:

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

SPENCER BACHUS III, OF ALABAMA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2023.

JUDITH DELZOPPO PRYOR, OF OHIO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2021.

KIMBERLY A. REED, OF WEST VIRGINIA, TO BE PRESIDENT OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2021.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

JANET DHILLON, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING JULY 1, 2022.

THE JUDICIARY

JOSEPH F. BIANCO, OF NEW YORK, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT.